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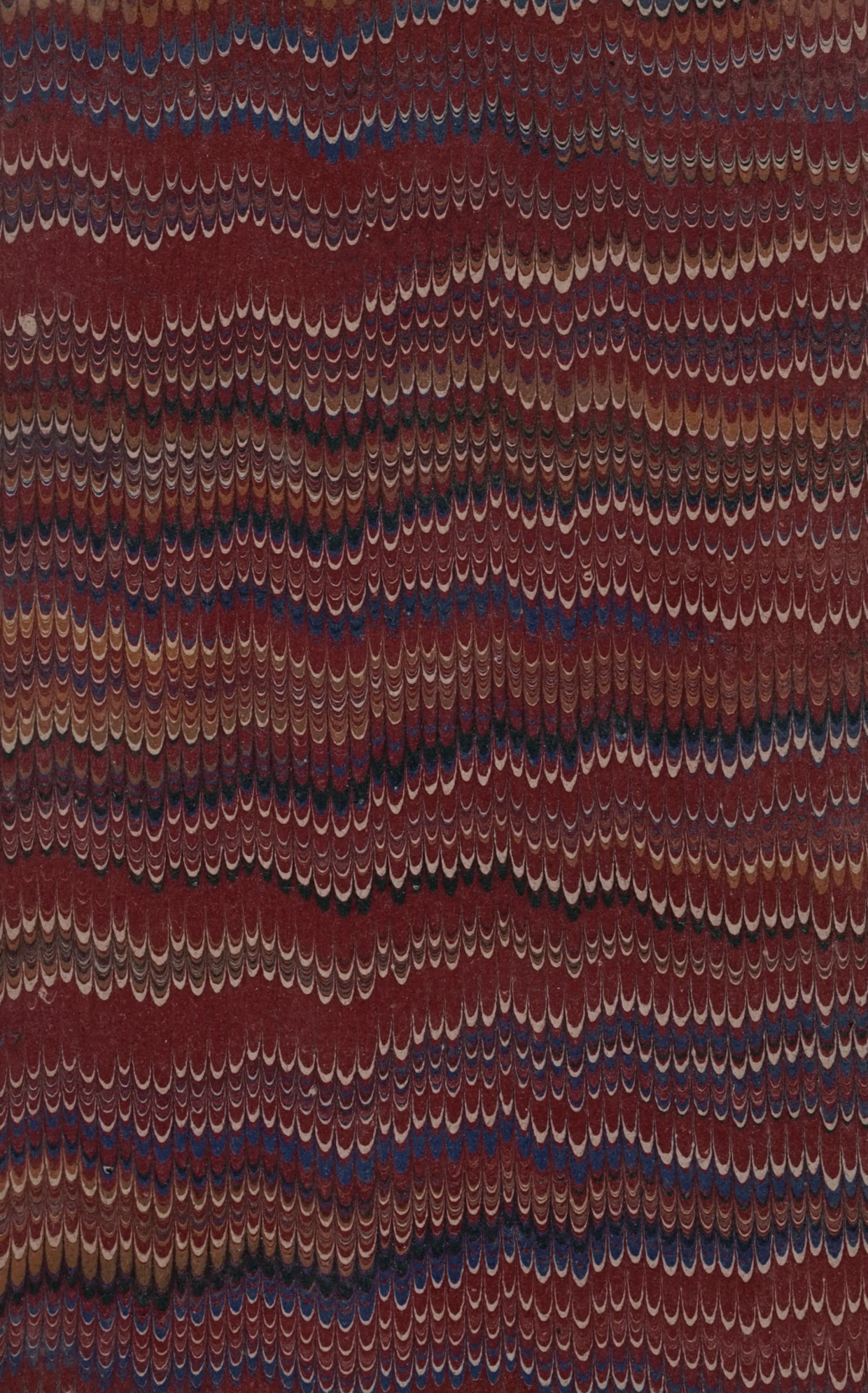
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By SAMUEL WARREN.

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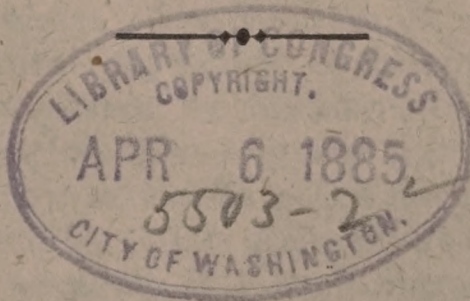


# The Merchant's Clerk.

By SAMUEL WARREN, LL.D.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And, with forced fingers rude,  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year:  
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear,  
Compel me to disturb your season due!

MILTON.



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## THE MERCHANT'S CLERK.

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Look, reader, once more with the eye and heart of sympathy, at a melancholy page in the book of human life—a sad one indeed, and almost the last that will be opened by one who has already laid several before you, and is about to take his departure.

It was pouring with rain one Wednesday, in the month of March, 18—, about twelve o'clock, and had been raining violently the whole morning. Only one patient had called upon me up to the hour just mentioned, for how could invalids stir out in such weather? The wind was cold and bitter—the aspect of things without, in short, most melancholy and cheerless. “There are one or two poor souls,” thought I, with a sigh, as I stepped from the desk at which I had been occupied in writing for more than an hour, and stood looking over the blinds into the deserted and almost deluged street—“there are one or two poor souls that would certainly have been here this morning, according to appointment, but for this unfriendly weather. Their cases are somewhat critical—one of them especially—and yet they are not such as to warrant my apprehending the worst. I wish, by the way, I had thought of asking their addresses! Ah—for the future I will make a point of taking down the residence of such as I may suspect to be in very humble or embarrassed circumstances. One can then, if necessary, call upon such persons—on such a day as this—at their own houses. There's that poor man, for instance, the bricklayer—he can not leave his work except at breakfast-time—I wonder how his poor child comes on! Poor fellow, how anxious he looked yesterday, when he asked me what I thought of his child! And his wife bed-ridden! Really, I'd make a point of calling, if I knew where he lived! He can't afford a coach—that's out of the question. Well—it can't be helped, however!” With this exclamation, half uttered, I looked at my watch, rung the bell, and ordered the carriage to be at the door in a quarter of an hour. I was sealing one of the letters I had been



writing, when I heard a knock at the street door, and in a few minutes my servant showed a lady into the room. She was apparently about four- or five-and-twenty; neatly but very plainly dressed; her features, despite an air of languor, as if from recent indisposition, without being strictly handsome, had a pleasing expression of frankness and spirit, and her address was easy and elegant. She was, however, evidently flurried. She "hoped she should not keep me at home—she could easily call again." I begged her to be seated; and in a quiet tone, at the same time proceeding with what I was engaged upon, that she might have a moment's interval in which to recover her self-possession, made some observations about the weather.

"It is still raining hard, I perceive," said I; "did you come on foot? Bless me, madam, why you seem wet through! Pray come nearer the fire;" (stirring it up into a cheerful blaze); "shall I offer you a glass of wine, or wine and water? You look very chilly."

"No, thank you, sir; I am rather wet certainly, but I am accustomed to rain; I will, however, sit closer to the fire, if you please, and tell you in a few words my errand. I shall not detain you long, sir," she continued, in a tone considerably more assured. "The fact is, I have received a letter this morning from a friend of mine in the country, a young lady who is an invalid, and has written to request I would call immediately upon some experienced physician, and obtain, as far as can be, his real opinion upon her case, for she fancies, poor girl! that they are concealing what is really the matter with her!"

"Well! she must have stated her case remarkably well, ma'am," said I, with a smile, "to enable me to give anything like a reasonable guess at her state without seeing her!"

"Oh, but I may be able to answer many of your questions, sir, for I am very well acquainted with her situation, and was a good deal with her, not long ago."

"Ah, that's well. Then will you be so kind," giving a monitory glance at my watch, "as to say what you know of her case? The fact is, I've ordered the carriage to be here in about a quarter of an hour's time, and I have a long day's work before me!"

"She is—let me see, sir—I should say about six years older than myself; that is, she is near thirty, or thereabouts. I should not think she was ever particularly strong. She's seen, poor thing, a good deal of trouble lately." She sighed.

"Oh, I see, I understand! A little disappointment—there's the seat of the mischief, I suppose?" I interrupted, smiling, and plac-



ing my hand over my heart. "Isn't this really, now, the whole secret?"

"Why—the fact is—certainly, I believe—yes, I may say that love has had a good deal to do with her present illness, for it is really illness! She has been—" she paused, hesitated, and, as I fancied, colored slightly—"crossed in love—yes! She was to have been—I mean—that is, she ought to have been married last autumn, but for this sad affair." I bowed, looking again at my watch, and she went on more quickly to describe her friend as being naturally rather delicate—that this "disappointment" had occasioned her a great deal of annoyance and agitation—that it had left her now in a very low nervous way, and, in short, her friend suspected herself to be falling into a decline. That about two months ago she had had the misfortune to be run over by a chaise, the pole of which struck her on the right chest, and the horses' hoofs also trampled upon her, but no ribs were broken.

"Ah, this is the most serious part of the story, ma'am—this looks like real illness! Pray, proceed, ma'am. I suppose your friend after this complained of much pain about the chest; is it so? Was there any spitting of blood?"

"Yes, a little—no—I mean—let me see." Here she took out of her pocket a letter, and unfolding it, cast her eyes over it for a moment or two, as if to refresh her memory by looking at her friend's statement.

"May I be allowed, ma'am, to look at the letter in which your friend describes her case?" I inquired, holding out my hand.

"There are some private matters contained in it, sir," she replied quickly; "the fact is, there was some blood-spitting at the time, which I believe has not yet quite ceased."

"And does she complain of pain in the chest?"

"Yes—particularly in the right side."

"Is she often feverish at night and in the morning?"

"Yes—very—that is, her hands feel very hot, and she is restless and irritable."

"Is there any perspiration?"

"Occasionally a good deal—during the night."

"Any cough?"

"Yes, at times, very troublesome, she says."

"Pray, how long has she had it? I mean, had she it before the accident you spoke of?"

"I first noticed it—let me see—ah, about a year after she was married."



"After she was married?" I echoed, darting a keen glance at her. She colored violently, and stammered confusedly.

"No, no, sir; I mean about a year after the time when she expected to be married."

There was something not a little curious and puzzling in all this. "Can you tell me, ma'am, what sort of a cough it is?" I inquired, shifting my chair, so that I might obtain a more distinct view of her features. She perceived what I was about, I think: for she seemed to change color a little, and to be on the verge of shedding tears. I repeated my question. She said that the cough was at first very slight; so slight that her friend had thought nothing of it, but at length it became a dry and painful one. She began to turn very pale. A suspicion of the real state of the case flashed across my mind.

"Now, tell me, ma'am, candidly—confess! Are not you speaking of yourself? You really look ill!"

She trembled, but assured me emphatically that I was mistaken. She appeared about to put some question to me, when her voice failed her, and her eyes, wandering to the window, filled with tears.

"Forgive me, sir! I am so anxious about my friend"—she sobbed—"she is a dear, kind, good—" Her agitation increased.

"Calm, pray calm yourself, ma'am; do not distress yourself unnecessarily! You must not let your friendly sympathies overcome you in this way, or you will be unable to serve your friend as you wish—as she has desired!"

I handed to her a bottle of smelling-salts, and after pausing for a few moments, her agitation subsided.

"Well," she began again, tremulously, "what do you think of her case, sir? You may tell me candidly, sir"—she was evidently making violent struggles to conceal her emotions—"for I assure you I will never make an improper use of what you may say—indeed I will not! What do you really think of her case?"

"Why—if all that you have said be correct, I own I fear it is a bad case—certainly a bad one," I replied, looking at her scrutinizingly. "You have mentioned some symptoms that are very unfavorable."

"Do you—think—her case hopeless, sir?" she inquired in a feeble tone, and looking at me with sorrowful intensity.

"Why, that is a very difficult question to answer—in her absence. One ought to see her—to hear her tell her own story—to ask a thousand little questions. I suppose, by the way, that she is under the care of a regular professional man?"

"Yes, I believe so—no, I am not sure; she has been, I believe."



I felt satisfied that she was speaking of herself. I paused, scarce knowing what to say. "Are her circumstances easy? Could she go to a warmer climate in the spring or early part of the summer? I really think that change of scene would do her greater good than anything I could prescribe for her."

She sighed. "It might be so; but—I know it could not be done. Circumstances, I believe—"

"Is she living with her family? Could not they—"

"Oh, no, there's no hope there, sir!" she replied, with sudden impetuosity. "No, no; they would see both of us perish before they would lift a finger to save us," she added with increasing vehemence of tone and manner. "So now it's all out—my poor, poor husband!" She fell into violent hysterics. The mystery was now dispelled—it was her husband's case that she had been all the while inquiring about. I saw it all! Poor soul, to gain my candid, my real opinion, she had devised an artifice to the execution of which she was unequal; overestimating her own strength, or rather not calculating upon the severe test she would have to encounter.

Ring the bell, I summoned a female servant, who, with my wife (she had heard the violent cries of my patient), instantly made her appearance, and paid all necessary attentions to the mysterious sufferer, as surely I might call her. The letter from which, in order to aid her little artifice, she had affected to read, had fallen upon the floor. It was merely a blank sheet of paper, folded in the shape of a letter, and directed, in a lady's handwriting, to "Mrs. Elliott, No. 5, — Street." This I put into my pocket book. She had also, in falling, dropped a small piece of paper, evidently containing my intended fee, neatly folded up. This I slipped into the reticule which lay beside her.

From what scene of wretchedness had this unhappy creature come to me?

The zealous services of my wife and her maid presently restored my patient, at least to consciousness, and her first look was one of gratitude for their assistance. She then attempted, but in vain, to speak, and her tears flowed fast. "Indeed, indeed, sir, I am no impostor! and yet I own I have deceived you! but pity me! Have mercy on a being quite forsaken and broken-hearted! I meant to pay you, sir, all the while. I only wished to get your true opinion about my unhappy husband. Oh, how very, very, very, wretched I am! What is to become of us! So—my poor husband! there's no hope! Oh, that I had been content with ignorance of your fate!" She sobbed bitterly, and my worthy little wife exhibited so much



firmness and presence of mind, as she stood beside her suffering sister, that I found it necessary gently to remove her from the room. What a melancholy picture of grief was before me in Mrs. Elliott, if that were her name. Her expressive features were flushed, and bedewed with weeping; her eyes swollen, and her dark hair, partially disheveled, gave a wildness to her countenance, which added to the effect of her incoherent exclamations. "I do—I do thank you, sir, for your candor. I feel that you have told me the truth! But what is to become of us? My most dreadful fears are confirmed! But I ought to have been home before this, and am only keeping you—"

"Not at all, ma'am—pray don't—"

"But my husband, sir, is ill—and there is no one to keep the child but him. I ought to have been back long ago!" She rose feebly from the chair, hastily readjusted her hair, and replaced her bonnet, preparing to go. She seemed to miss something, and looked about the floor, obviously embarrassed at not discovering the object of her search.

"It is in your reticule, ma'am," I whispered; "and, unless you would affront and wound me, there let it remain. I know what you have been looking for—hush! do not think of it again. My carriage is at the door; shall I take you as far as —— Street! I am driving past it."

"No, sir, I thank you; but—not for the world! My husband has no idea that I have been here; he thinks I have been only to the druggist. I would not have him know of this visit on any account. He would instantly suspect all." She grew again excited. "Oh what a wretch I am! How long must I play the hypocrite? I must look happy, and say that I have hope when I am despairing—and he dying daily before my eyes! Oh, how terrible will home be after this! But how long have I suspected all this!"

I succeeded, at length, in allaying her agitation, imploring her to strive to regain her self-possession before reappearing in the presence of her husband. She promised to contrive some excuse for summoning me to see her husband, as if in the first instance, as though it were the first time I had seen or heard of either of them, and assured me that she would call upon me again in a few days' time. "But sir," she whispered, hesitatingly, as I accompanied her through the hall to the street door, "I am really afraid we can not afford to trouble you often."

"Madam, you will greatly grieve and offend me if you ever allude to this again before I mention it to you. Indeed you will,



ma'am," I added peremptorily but kindly; and reiterating my injunctions, that she should let me soon see her, or hear from her, I closed the door upon her, satisfied that ere long would be laid before me another dark page in the volume of human life.

Having been summoned to visit a patient somewhere in the neighborhood of — Street that evening, and being on foot, it struck me, as it was beginning again to rain heavily, that if I were to step into some one of the little shops close by, I might be sheltered a while from the rain, and also possibly gain some information as to the character and circumstances of my morning visitor. I pitched upon a small shop that was "licensed" to sell everything, but especially groceries. The proprietor was a little lame old man, who was busy, as I entered, making up small packets of snuff and tobacco. He allowed the plea of the rain, and permitted me to sit down on the bench near the window. A couple of candles shed their dull light over the miscellaneous articles of merchandise with which the shop was stuffed. He looked like an old rat in his hoard! He was civil and communicative, and I was not long in gaining the information I desired. He knew the Elliotts; they lived at number five, up two pairs of stairs—but had not been there above three or four months. He thought Mr. Elliott was "ailing;" and for the matter of that his wife didn't look the strongest woman in the world. "And pray what business or calling is he?" The old man put his spectacles back upon his head, and after musing a moment, replied, "Why now, I can't take upon me to say precisely like—but I think he's something in the city, in the mercantile way—at least I've got it into my head that he has been such; but he also teaches music, and I know she sometimes takes in needle-work."

"Needle-work! does she indeed?" I echoed, taking her letter from my pocket-book, and looking at the beautiful, the fashionable hand in which the direction was written, and which, I felt confident, was her own. "Ah! then I suppose they're not over-well-to-do in the world!"

"Why—you an't a going to do anything to them, sir; are you? May I ask if you're a lawyer, sir?"

"No, indeed, I am not," said I, with a smile—"nor is this a writ! It's only the direction of a letter, I assure you; I feel a little interested about these people—at the same time, I don't know much about them, as you may perceive. Were not you saying that you thought them in difficulties?"

"Why," he replied, somewhat reassured, "maybe you're not far from the mark in that either. They deal here—and they pay me for



what they have—but their custom an't very heavy! 'Deed they has uncommon little in the grocery way, but pays reg'lar; and that's better than them that has a good deal, and yet doesn't pay at all—an't it, sir?" I assented. "They used, when they first came here, to have six-and-six-penny tea and lump sugar, but this week or two back they've had only five-and-six-penny tea and worst sugar—but my five-and-sixpenny tea is an uncommon good article, and as good as many people's six-shilling tea! only smell it, sir!" And whisking himself round, he briskly dislodged a japanned canister, and whipping off the lid, put a handful of the contents into it. The conclusion I arrived at was not a very favorable one; the stuff he handed me seemed an abominable compound of raisin stalks and sloe leaves. "They're uncommon economical, sir," he continued, putting back again his precious commodity, "for they makes two or three ounces of this do for a week—unless they goes elsewhere, which I don't think they do, by the way; and I'm sure they oughtn't; for, though I say it as shouldn't they might go further and fare worse, and without going a mile from here either—hem! By the way, Mrs. Elliott was in here not an hour ago, for a moment, asking for some sage, because she said Mr. Elliott had taken a fancy to have some sage milk for his supper to-night. It was very unlucky; I hadn't half a handful left! So she was obliged to go to the druggist at the other end of the street. Poor thing, she looked so vexed; for she has quite a confidence, like, in what she gets here!"

"True, very likely! You said, by the way, you thought he taught music—what kind of music?"

"Why, sir, he's rather a good hand at the flute, his landlady says. So he comes in to me about a month since, and he says to me, 'Bennet,' says he, 'may I direct letters for me to be left at your shop? I'm going to put an advertisement in the newspaper.' 'That,' says I, 'depends on what it's about—what are you advertising for?' (not meaning to be impudent); and he says, says he, 'Why, I've taken it into my head, Bennet, to teach the flute, and I'm a-going to try to get some one to learn it to.' So he put the advertisement in—but he didn't get more than one letter, and that brought him a young lad—but he didn't stay long. 'Twas a beautiful black flute, sir, with silver on it; for Mrs. Hooper, his landlady—she's an old friend of my mistress, sir—showed it to us one Sunday, when we took a cup of tea with her, and the Elliotts was gone out for a walk. I don't think he can teach it now sir," he continued, dropping his voice; "for, between you and I, old Browning the pawnbroker, a



little way up on the left-hand side, has a flute in his window that's the very image of what Mrs. Hooper showed us that night I was speaking of. You understand me, sir? Pawned—or sold—I'll answer for it—ahem!"

"Ah, very probable—yes, very likely!" I replied, sighing—hoping my gossiping host would go on.

"And between you and I, sir," he resumed, "it wasn't a bad thing for him to get rid of it, either; for Mrs. Hooper told us that Mr. Elliott wasn't strong like to play on it; and she used to hear Mrs. Elliott (she is an uncommon agreeable young woman, sir, to look at, and looks like one that has been better off): I was a-saying, however, that Mrs. Hooper used now and then to hear Mrs. Elliott cry a good deal about his playing on the flute, and 'spostulate to him on the account of it, and say 'You know it isn't a good thing for you, dear.' Nor was it, sir—the doctors would say!"

"Poor fellow!" I exclaimed, with a sigh, not meaning to interrupt my companion—"of all things on earth—the flute!"

"Ah!" replied the worthy grocer, "things are in a bad way when they come to that pass—arn't they! But Lord, sir!" dropping his voice, and giving a hurried glance toward a door, opening, I suppose, into his sitting-room—"there's nothing partic'lar in that, after all. My mistress and I, even, have done such things before now, at a push, when we've been hard driven! You know, sir, poverty's no sin—is it?"

"God forbid, indeed, my worthy friend!" I replied, as a customer entered to purchase a modicum of cheese or bacon; and thanking Mr. Bennet for his civility in affording me a shelter so long, I quitted his shop. The rain continued, and, as is usually the case, no hackney-coach made its appearance till I was nearly wet through. My interest in poor Mrs. Elliott and her husband was greatly increased by what I had heard from the gossiping grocer. How distinctly, though perhaps unconsciously, had he sketched the downward progress of respectable poverty! I should await the next visit of Mrs. Elliott with some eagerness and anxiety. Nearly a week, however, elapsed before I again heard of Mrs. Elliott, who called at my house one morning when I had been summoned to pay an early visit to a patient in the country. After having waited nearly an hour for me, she was obliged to leave, after writing the following lines on the back of an old letter:

"Mrs. Elliott begs to present her respects to Doctor —, and to inform him, that if quite convenient to him, she would feel favored by his calling on Mr. Elliott any time to-day or to-morrow. She



begs to remind him of his promise not to let Mr. Elliott suppose that Mrs. Elliott has told him anything about Mr. Elliott, except generally that he is poorly. The address is No. 5, — Street, near — Square."

At three o'clock that afternoon, I was at their lodging in — Street. No. 5 was a small decent draper's shop; and a young woman sitting at work behind the counter referred me, on inquiring for Mr. Elliott, to the private door, which she said I could easily push open; that the Elliotts lived on the second floor, but she thought that Mrs. Elliott had just gone out. Following her directions, I soon found myself ascending the narrow staircase. On approaching the second floor, the door of the apartment I took to be Mr. Elliott's was standing nearly wide open; and the scene which presented itself I paused for a few moments to contemplate. Almost fronting the door, at a table on which were several huge ledgers and account books, sat a young man apparently about thirty, who seemed to have just dropped asleep over a wearisome task. His left hand supported his head, and in his right was a pen which he seemed to have fallen asleep almost in the act of using. Propped up, on the table, between two huge books, a little toward his left-hand side, sat a child, seemingly a little boy, and a very pretty one, so engrossed with some plaything or another as not to perceive my approach. I felt that this was Mr. Elliott, and stopped for a few seconds to observe him. His countenance was manly, and had plainly been once very handsome. It was now considerably emaciated, overspread with a sallow hue, and wore an expression of mingled pain and exhaustion. The thin white hand holding the pen also bespoke the invalid. His hair was rather darker than his wife's, and being combed aside, left exposed to view an ample well-formed forehead. In short, he seemed a very interesting person. He was dressed in black, his coat being buttoned evidently for warmth's sake; for though it was March, and the weather very bleak and bitter, there was scarce any appearance of fire in about the smallest grate I ever saw. The room was small, but very clean and comfortable, though not overstocked with furniture—what there was being of the most ordinary kind. A little noise I made attracted, at length, the child's attention. It turned round, started on seeing a stranger, and disturbed its father, whose eyes looked suddenly but heavily at his child, and then at my approaching figure.

"Pray walk in," said he, with a kind of mechanical civility, but evidently not completely roused from sleep. "I—I—am very sorry—the accounts are not yet balanced—very sorry—been at them al-



most the whole day." He suddenly paused, and recollected himself. He had, it seemed, mistaken me, at the moment, for some one whom he had expected.

"Dr. ——" said I, bowing, and advancing.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, sir; pray walk in, and take a seat." I did so. "I believe Mrs. Elliott called upon you this morning, sir? I am sorry she has just stepped out, but she will return soon. She will be very sorry she was not at home when you called."

"I should have been happy to see Mrs. Elliott, but I understood from a few lines she left at my house that this visit was to be paid to yourself—is it not so? Can I be of any assistance?"

"Certainly! I feel far from well, sir. I have been in but middling health for some time, but my wife thinks me, I am sure, much worse than I really am, and frets herself a good deal about me."

I proceeded to inquire fully into his case; and he showed very great intelligence and readiness in answering all my questions. He had detected in himself, some years ago, symptoms of a liver complaint, which a life of much confinement and anxiety had since contributed to aggravate. He mentioned the accident alluded to by Mrs. Elliott; and when he had concluded a singularly terse and distinct statement of his case, I had formed a pretty decisive opinion upon it. I thought there was a strong tendency to hepatic phthisis, but that it might, with proper care, be arrested, if not even overcome. I expressed myself in very cautious terms.

"Do you really, candidly think, sir, that I have a reasonable chance of recovering my health?" he inquired, with a sigh, at the same time folding in his arms his little boy, whose concerned features, fixed in silence, now upon his father, and then upon me, as each of us spoke, almost led me to think that he appreciated the grave import of our conversation.

"Yes, I certainly think it probable—very probable—that you would recover, provided, as I said before, you use the means I pointed out."

"And the chief of those means are—relaxation and country air?"

"Certainly."

"You consider them essential?" he inquired, despondingly.

"Undoubtedly. Repose, both bodily and mental, change of scene, fresh air, and some medical treatment."

He listened in silence, his eyes fixed on the floor, while an expression of profound melancholy overspread his countenance. He seemed absorbed in a painful reverie. I fancied that I could not



mistake the subject of his thoughts; and ventured to interrupt them, by saying in a low tone, "It would not be very expensive, Mr. Elliott, after all."

"Ah, sir—that is what I am thinking about," he replied, with a deep sigh; and he relapsed into his former troubled silence.

"Suppose—suppose, sir, I were able to go into the country and rest a little, a twelvemonth hence, and in the meantime attend as much as possible to my health, is it probable that it would not then be too late?"

"Oh, come, Mr. Elliott, let us prefer the sunshine to the cloud," said I, with a cheerful air, hearing a quick step advancing to the door, which was opened, as I expected, by Mrs. Elliott, who entered breathless with haste.

"How do you do, ma'am—Mrs. Elliott, I presume?" said I, wishing to put her on her guard, and prevent her appearing to have seen me before.

"Yes, sir—Mrs Elliott," said she, catching the hint, and then turning quickly to her husband, "How are you, love? I hope Henry has been good with you!"

"Very—he's been a very good little boy," replied Elliott, surrendering him to Mrs. Elliott, whom he was struggling to reach.

"But how are you, dear?" repeated his wife, anxiously.

"Pretty well," he replied, adding, with a faint smile, at the same time pushing his foot against mine, under the table, "As you would have Dr.—, he is here; but we can't make out why you thought fit to summon him in such haste."

"A very little suffices to alarm a lady," said I, with a smile. "I was sorry, Mrs. Elliott, that you had to wait so long for me this morning—I hope I did not inconvenience you." I began to think how I should manage to decline the fee I perceived they were preparing to give me, for I was obliged to leave, and drew on my gloves. "We've had a long *tête-à-tête*, Mrs. Elliott, in your absence. I must commit him to your gentle care; you will prove the better physician. He must submit to you in everything; you must not allow him to exert himself too much over matters like these," pointing to the huge folios lying upon the table; "he must keep regular hours, and if all of you could go to a lodging on the outskirts of the town, the fresh air would do you a world of good. You must undertake the case, ma'am—you must really pledge yourself to this." The poor couple exchanged hurried glances, in silence. He attempted a smile. "What a sweet little fellow is this," said I, taking their little child into my arms—a miracle of



neatness and cleanliness—and affecting to be eagerly engaged with him. He came to me readily, and forthwith began an incomprehensible address to me about “da-da”—“pa-pa”—“ma-ma,” and other similarly mysterious terms, which I was obliged to cut short by promising to come and talk again with him in a day or two. “Good day, Master Elliott!” said I, giving him back to his father, who at the same time slipped a guinea in my hand. I took it easily. “Come, sirrah,” said I, addressing the child, “will you be my banker?” shutting his little fingers on the guinea.

“Pardon me—excuse me, doctor,” interrupted Mr. Elliott, blushing scarlet, “this must not be. I really can not—”

“Ah! may I not employ what banker I like? Well—I’ll hear what you have to say about it when we meet again. Farewell for a day or two.” And with these words, bowing hastily to Mrs. Elliott, who looked at me through her tear-filled eyes unutterable things, I hurried down-stairs. It may seem sufficiently absurd to dwell so long upon the insignificant circumstance of declining a fee; a thing done by my brethren daily—often as a matter of course; but it is a matter that has often occasioned me no inconsiderable embarrassment. ‘Tis really often a difficult thing to refuse a fee proffered by those one knows to be unable to afford it, so as not to make them uneasy under the sense of an obligation—to wound delicacy, or offend an honorable pride. I had, only a few days before, by the way, almost asked for my guinea from a gentleman who is worth many thousands a year, and who dropped the fee into my hand as though it were a drop of his heart’s blood.

I felt much gratified with the appearance and manners of Mr. and Mrs. Elliott, and disposed to cultivate their acquaintance. Both were too evidently oppressed with melancholy, which was not, however, sufficient to prevent my observing the simplicity and manliness of the husband, the fascinating frankness of the wife. How her eyes devoured him with fond anxiety! Often while conversing with them, a recollection of some of the touching little details communicated by their garrulous grocer brought the tears for an instant to my eyes. Possibly poor Mrs. Elliott had been absent, either seeking employment for her needle, or taking home what she had been engaged upon—both of them thus laboring to support themselves by means to which she, at least, seemed utterly unaccustomed, as far as one could judge from her demeanor and conversation. Had they pressed me much longer about accepting my fee, I am sure I should have acted foolishly; for when I held their guinea in my hand, the thought of their small weekly allowance of an ounce or



two of tea—their brown sugar—his pawned flute—almost determined me to defy all delicacy, and return them their guinea doubled. I could enter into every feeling, I thought, which agitated their hearts, and appreciate the despondency, the hopelessness with which they listened to my mention of the indispensable necessity of change of scene and repose. Probably, while I was returning home, they were mingling bitter tears as they owned to one another the impossibility of adopting my suggestions; he feeling, and she fearing, neither, however, daring to express it, that his days were numbered—that he must toil to the last, for a scanty livelihood—and even then leave his wife and child, it seemed but too probable, destitute—that, in the sorrowful language of Burns,

“ Still caring, despairing,  
Must be his bitter doom:  
His woes here, 'shall close ne'er  
But with the closing tomb.” \*

I felt sure that there was some secret and grievous source of misery in the background, and often thought of the expression she had frantically uttered when at my house. Had either of them married against the wishes of a proud and unrelenting family? Little did I think that I had, on that very day which first brought me acquainted with Mrs. Elliott, paid a professional visit to one fearfully implicated in the infliction of their present sufferings! But I anticipate.

I need not particularize the steps by which I became at length familiarly acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Elliott. I found them for a long while extremely reserved on the subject of their circumstances, except as far as an acknowledgment that their pecuniary resources were somewhat precarious. He was, or rather, it seemed, had been, a clerk in a merchant's counting-house; but ill health obliged him at length to quit his situation, and seek for such occasional employment as would admit of being attended to at his own lodging. His labors in this way were, I perceived, notwithstanding my injunctions and his promises, of the most intense and unremitting, and, I feared, ill-requited description. But with what heart could I continue my remonstrances, when I felt convinced that thus he must toil or starve? She also was forced to contribute her efforts toward their support, as I often saw her eagerly and rapidly engaged upon dresses and other articles too splendid to be for her own use. I could not help one day in the fullness of my heart, seeing her thus

\* *Despondency*, an Ode.



engaged, telling her that I had many a time since my marriage seen my wife similarly engaged. She looked at me with surprise for a few moments, and burst into tears. She forced off her rising emotions; but she was from that moment aware that I fully saw and appreciated her situation. It was on a somewhat similar occasion that she and her husband were at length induced to tell me their little history; and before giving the reader an account of what fell under my own personal observation, I shall lay before him, in my own way, the substance of several painfully interesting conversations with this most unfortunate couple. Let not the ordinary reader spurn details of every-day life, such as will here follow,

“Nor *grandeur* hear, with a disdainful smile,  
The short and simple annals of the poor.”

Owing to a terrible domestic calamity, it became necessary that Henry Elliott, an only son, educating at Oxford, and destined for the army, should suddenly quit the university, and seek a livelihood by his own exertions in London. The event which occasioned this sudden blight to his prospects was the suicide of his father, Major Elliott; whose addiction to gambling, having for a long time seriously embarrassed his affairs, and nearly broken the heart of his wife, at length led him to commit the fatal act above spoken of. His widow survived the shock scarce a twelvemonth, and her unfortunate son was then left alone in the world, and almost entirely destitute. The trifling sum of ready money which remained in his possession after burying his mother was exhausted, and the scanty pittance afforded by his relatives withdrawn on the ground that he ought now to support himself, when his occasional inquiries after a situation at length led to the information that there was a vacancy for an outer clerk in the great house of Hillary, Hungate, & Co., Mincing Lane, in the city. He succeeded in satisfying the junior partner of this house, after submitting to a great number of humiliating inquiries in regard to his respectability and trustworthiness; and he was forthwith received into the establishment, at a salary of £60 per annum.

It was a sad day for poor Elliott when he sold off almost all his college books, and a few other remnants of gay and happy days, gone by probably forever, for the purpose of equipping himself becomingly for his new and humble functions. He wrote an excellent hand; and being of a decided mathematical turn, the arithmetic of the counting-house was easily mastered. What dismal drudgery had he henceforth daily to undergo! The tyranny of the



upper clerks reminded him, with a pang, of the petty tyranny he had both received and inflicted at the public school where he had been educated. How infinitely more galling and intolerable was his present bondage! Two thirds of the day he was kept constantly on foot, hurrying from place to place, with bills, letters, etc., and on other errands; and especially on foreign post nights, he was detained slaving sometimes till nine or ten at night, copying letters, and assisting in making entries and balancing accounts, till his pen almost dropped from his wearied fingers. He was allowed an hour in the middle of the day for dinner; and even this little interval was often broken in upon to such an extent as proved seriously prejudicial to his health. After all the labors of the day, he had to trudge from Mincing Lane, along the odious City Road up to almost the extremity of Islington, where was situated his lodging, that is, a little back bedroom, on the third floor, serving at once for his sitting- and sleeping-room, and for the use of which he paid at the rate of seven shillings a week, exclusive of extras. Still he conformed to his cheerless lot, calmly and resolutely, with a true practical stoicism that did him honor. His regular and frugal habits enabled him to subsist upon his scanty salary with decency, if not comfort, and without running into debt—that infallible destructive of all peace of mind and all self-respect! His sole enjoyment was an occasional hour in the evening, spent in reading, and retracing some of his faded acquisitions in mathematics. Though a few of his associates were piqued at what they considered his sullen and inhospitable disposition, yet his obliging manners, his easy but melancholy deportment, his punctuality and exactitude in all his engagements, soon gained him the good-will of his brethren in the office, and occasionally an indication of satisfaction on the part of some one of his august employers.

Thus, at length, Elliott overcame the numerous *désagréments* of his altered situation, seeking in constant employment to forget both the gloom and gayeties of the past. Two or three years passed over, Elliott continuing thus steadily in his course; and his salary, as a proof of the approbation of his employers, had been annually increased by £10 till he was placed in comparative affluence by the receipt of a salary of £90. His severe exertions, however, insensibly impaired a constitution, never very vigorous, and he bore with many a fit of indisposition, rather than incur the expense of medical attendance. It may be added, that Elliott was a man of gentlemanly exterior and engaging deportment—and then let us pass to a very different person.



Mr. Hillary, the head of the firm, a man of very great wealth, had risen from being a mere errand boy, to his present eminence in the mercantile world, through a rare combination of good fortune and personal merit—merit, as far as concerns a talent for business, joined with prudence and enterprise. If ever there came a man within the terms of Burke's famous philippic, it was Mr. Hillary. His only object was money-making; he knew nothing, cared for nothing beyond it; till the constant contemplation of his splendid gains led his desires into the train of personal aggrandizement. With the instinctive propensities of a mean and coarse mind, he became as tyrannical and insolent in success as in adversity he had been supple and cringing. No spark of generous or worthy feelings had ever been struck from the flinty heart of Jacob Hillary, of the firm of Hillary, Hungate, and Company. He was the idol of a constant throng of wealth-worshippers; to everybody else, he was an object either of contempt or terror. He had married the widow of a deceased partner, by whom he had had several children, of whom one only lived beyond infancy—a generous, high-spirited, enthusiastic girl, whom her purse-proud father had destined, in his own weak and vain ambition, to become the wearer of a coronet. On this dazzling object were Mr. Hillary's eyes fixed with unwavering earnestness; he desired and longed to pour the tide of his gold through the channel of a peerage. In person, Mr. Hillary was of the middle height, but gross and corpulent. There was no intellect in his shining bald head, fringed with bristling white hair—nor was there any expression in his harsh and coarse features, but such as faithfully adumbrated his character as above described.

This was the individual, who, in stepping one morning rather hastily from his carriage, at his counting-house door in Mincing Lane, fell from the carriage step, most severely injuring his right ankle and shoulder. The injuries he received upon this occasion kept him confined for a long period to his bed, and for a still longer one to an easy-chair in the back drawing-room of his spacious mansion near Highbury. As soon as he was able to attend to business, he issued orders that as Elliott was the clerk whose residence was nearest to Bullion House, he should attend him every morning for an hour or two on matters of business, carrying Mr. Hillary's orders to the city, and especially bringing him, day by day, in a sealed envelope, his banker's book! A harassing post this proved for poor Elliott.

Severe discipline had trained his temper to bear more than most men: on these occasions it was tried to the uttermost. Mr. Hillary's



active and energetic mind kept thus in comparative and compulsive seclusion from the only concerns he cared for or that could occupy it—always excepting the one great matter already alluded to—his imperious and irritable temper became almost intolerable. Elliott would certainly have thrown up his employment under Mr. Hillary in disgust and despair, had it not been for one circumstance—the presence of Miss Hillary—whose sweet appealing looks day after day melted away the resolution with which Elliott every morning came before her choleric and overbearing father, although they could not mitigate that father's evil temper, or prevent its manifestations. He insisted on her spending the greater part of every day in his presence, nor would allow her to quit it even at the periods when Elliott made his appearance. The first casual and hasty glance that he directed toward her, satisfied him that he had, in earlier and happy days, been many times in general society with her—her partner even in the dance. Now, however, he dared not venture to exhibit the slightest indication of recognition; and she, it struck by similar recollections, thought fit to conceal them, and behave precisely as though she then saw and heard of Mr. Elliott for the first time in her life. He could not, of course, find fault with her for this; but he felt it deeply and bitterly. He little knew how much he wronged her! She instantly recollected him—and it was only the dread of her father that restrained her from a friendly greeting. Having once adopted such a line of conduct, it became necessary to adhere to it—and she did. But could she prevent her heart going out in sympathy toward the poor, friendless, unoffending clerk whom her father treated more like a mere menial than a respectable and confidential servant—him whom she knew to be

“ Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,  
Fallen from his high estate ”?

Every day that she saw him, her woman's heart throbbed with pity toward him; and pity is indeed akin to love. How favorably for him did his temper and demeanor contrast with those of her father! And she saw him placed daily in a situation calculated to exhibit his real character—his disposition, whether for good or evil. The fact was, that he had become an object of deep interest—even of love—to her, long before the thought had ever occurred to him that she viewed him, from day to day, with feelings different from those with which she would look at the servant that stood at her father's sideboard at dinner. His mind was kept constantly occupied by his impetuous employer, and his hundred questions about everything



that had or had not happened every day in the city. Thus for nearly three months had these unconscious lovers been brought daily for an hour or two into each other's presence. He had little idea of the exquisite pain occasioned Miss Hillary by her father's harsh and unfeeling treatment of him, nor of the many timid attempts she made, in his absence, to prevent the recurrence of such treatment; and as for the great man, Mr. Hillary, it never crossed his mind as being possible that two young hearts could, by any means, when in different ranks of society, one rich, the other poor, be warmed into a feeling of regard, and even love for one another.

One afternoon Elliott was obliged to come a second time that day from the city, bearing important dispatches from Mincing Lane to Mr. Hillary, who was sitting in his invalid-chair, flanked on one hand by his daughter, and on the other by a little table, on which stood wine and fruit. Poor Elliott looked, as well he might, exhausted with his long and rapid walk through the fervid sunshine.

"Well, sir—what now?" said her father, quickly and peremptorily, at the same time eagerly stretching forth his hand to receive a letter which Elliott presented to him.

"Humph! Sit down there, sir, for a few minutes!" Elliott obeyed. Miss Hillary, who had been reading, touched with Elliott's pale and wearied look, whispered to her father, "Papa—Mr. Elliott looks dreadfully tired—may I offer him a glass of wine?"

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Hillary, hastily, without removing his eyes from the letter he had that instant opened. Miss Hillary instantly poured out a glass of wine; and as Elliott approached to take it from the table, with a respectful bow, his eye encountered hers, which was instantly withdrawn; but not before it had cast a glance upon him that electrified him—that fell suddenly like a spark of fire amid the combustible feelings of a most susceptible but subdued heart. It fixed the fate of their lives. The train so long laid had been at length unexpectedly ignited, and the confounded clerk returned or rather staggered toward his chair, fancying that everything in the room was whirling around him. It was well for both of them that Mr. Hillary was at that eventful moment absorbingly engaged with a letter announcing the sudden arrival of three ships with large cargoes of an article of which he had been attempting a monopoly, and in doing so had sunk a very large sum of ready money. In vain did the conscious and confused girl—confused as Elliott—remove her chair to the window, with her back toward him, and attempt to proceed with the book she had been reading. Her head seemed in a whirlpool.



"Get my my desk, Mary, immediately," said her father, suddenly.

"No, indeed, papa, you didn't," replied Miss Hillary, as suddenly, for her father's voice had recalled her from a strange reverie.

"My desk, Mary—my desk—d'ye hear?" repeated her father, in a peremptory manner, still conning over the letter which told him, in effect, that he would retire to bed that night four or five thousand pounds poorer than he rose from it—ignorant that within the last few moments, in his very presence, had happened that which was to put an end forever to all his dreams of a coronet glittering upon his daughter's brow!

Miss Hillary obeyed her father's second orders, carefully looking in every direction but that in which she would have encountered Elliott; and whispering a word or two into her father's ear, quitted the room. Elliott's heart was beating quickly, when the harsh tones of Mr. Hillary, who had worked himself into a very violent humor, fell upon his ear, directing him to return immediately to the city, and say he had no answer to send till the morning, when he was to be in attendance at an early hour.

Scarce knowing whether he stood on his head or his heels, Elliott hurriedly bowed, and withdrew. Borne along on the current of his tumultuous emotions, he seemed to fly down the swarming City Road; and when he reached the dull dingy little back counting-house where he was to be occupied till a late hour of the night, he found himself not in the fittest humor in the world for his task. Could he possibly be mistaken in interpreting Miss Hillary's look? Was it not corroborated by her subsequent conduct? And, by the way, now that he came to glance backward into the two or three months during which he had been almost daily in her presence, divers little incidents started up into his recollections, all tending the same way. "Heigho!" exclaimed Elliott, laying down his yet unused pen, after a long and bewildering reverie—"I wonder what Miss Hillary is thinking about! Surely I have had a kind of day-dream! It can't have really happened! And yet—how could there have been a mistake? Heaven knows I had taken nothing to excite or disorder me—except, perhaps, my long walk. Here's a *coup de soleil*, by the way, with a witness! But only to think of it—Miss Hillary—daughter of Jacob Hillary, Esq.—in love with—an under clerk of her father's—pho! it will never do! I'll think of it to-morrow morning." Thus communed Elliott with himself, by turns writing, pausing, and soliloquizing, till the lateness of the hour compelled him to apply to his task in good earnest. He did not



quit his desk till it had struck ten; from which period till that at which he tumbled into his little bed, he fancied that scarcely five minutes had elapsed.

He made his appearance at Bullion House the next morning with a sad fluttering about the heart, but it soon subsided, for Miss Hillary was not present to prolong his agitation. He had not been seated for many minutes, however, before he observed her in a distant part of the gardens, apparently tending some flowers. As his eye followed the movements of her graceful figure he could not avoid a faint sigh of regret at his own absurdity in raising such a superstructure of splendid possibilities upon so slight a foundation. His attention was at that instant arrested by Mr. Hillary's multifarious commands for the city; and, in short, Miss Hillary's absence from town for about a week added to a great increase of business at the counting-house, owing to an extensive failure of a foreign correspondent, gradually restored Elliott to his senses, and banished the intrusive image of his lovely tormentor. Her unequivocal exhibition of feeling, however—unequivocal at least to him—on the occasion of the next meeting, instantly revived all his former excitement, and plunged him afresh into the soft tumult of doubts, hopes and fears, from which he had so lately emerged. Every day that he returned to Mr. Hillary brought him fresh evidence of the extent to which he had encroached upon Miss Hillary's affections; and strange, indeed, must be that heart which, feeling itself alone and despised in the world, can suddenly find itself the object of a most enthusiastic and disinterested attachment without kindling into a flame of grateful affection. Was there anything wonderful or improbable in the conduct attributed to Miss Hillary? No. A girl of frank and generous feeling, she saw in one, whom undeserved misfortune had placed in a very painful and trying position, the constant exhibition of high qualities; a patient and dignified submission to her father's cruel and oppressive treatment—a submission on her account; she beheld his high feeling conquering misfortune; she saw in his eye—his every look—his whole demeanor, susceptibilities of an exalted description; and beyond all this—last, though not least, as Elliott acted the gentleman, so he looked it—and a handsome gentleman, too! So it came to pass, then, that these two hearts became acquainted with each other, despite the obstacles of circumstance and situation. A kind of telegraphing courtship was carried on between them daily, which must have been observed by Mr. Hillary, but for the engrossing interest with which he regarded the communications of which Elliott was always the bearer. Mr.



Hillary began, however, at length, to recover the use of his limbs, and rapidly to gain general strength. He consequently announced one morning to Elliott that he should not require him to call after to-morrow.

At this time the lovers had never interchanged a syllable together, either verbal or written, that could savor of love; and yet each was as confident of the state of the other's feelings as though a hundred closely-written, and closer-crossed letters, had been passing between them. On the dreadful morrow he was pale and somewhat confused, nor was she far otherwise; but she had a sufficient reason in the indisposition of her mother, who had for many months been a bed-ridden invalid. As for Elliott, he was safe. He might have appeared at death's door without attracting the notice, or exciting the inquiries, of his callous employer. As he rose to leave the room Elliott bowed to Mr. Hillary; but his last glance was directed toward Miss Hillary, who, however, at that moment was, or appeared to be, too busily occupied with pouring out her excellent father's coffee, to pay any attention to her retiring lover, who consequently retired from her presence not a little piqued and alarmed.

They had no opportunity of seeing one another till nearly a month after the occasion just alluded to, when they met under circumstances very favorable for the expression of such feelings as either of them dared to acknowledge—and the opportunity was not thrown away. Mr. Hillary had quitted town for the north, on urgent business, which was expected to detain him for nearly a fortnight; and Elliott failed not, on the following Sunday, to be at the post he had constantly occupied for some months—namely, a seat in the gallery of the church attended by Mr. Hillary and his family, commanding a distant view of the great central pew—matted, hassocked, and velvet-cushioned, with a rich array of splendid implements of devotion, in the shape of Bibles and prayer-books, great and small, with gilt edges, and in blue and red morocco, being the favored spot occupied by the great merchant—where he was pleased by his presence to assure the admiring vicar of his respect for him and the Established Church. Miss Hillary had long since been aware of the presence of her timid and distant lover on these occasions; they had several times nearly jostled against one another in going out of church, the consequence of which was generally a civil though silent recognition of him. And this might be done with impunity, seeing how her wealthy father was occupied with nodding to everybody, genteel enough to be so publicly recognized, and shaking hands with the select few who enjoyed his personal acquaintance.



With what a different air and with what a different feeling did the great merchant and his humble clerk pass on these occasions down the aisle.

But to return. On the Sunday above alluded to Elliott beheld Miss Hillary enter the church alone, and become the solitary tenant of the family pew. Sad truants from his prayer-book, his eyes never quitted the fair and solitary occupant of Mr. Hillary's pew; but she chose, in some wayward humor, to sit that morning with her back turned toward the part of the church where she knew Elliott to be, and never once looked up in that direction. They met, however, after the service, near the door, as usual: she dropped her black veil just in time to prevent his observing a certain sudden flush that forced itself upon her features; returned his modest bow; a few words of course were interchanged; it threatened, or Elliott chose to represent that it threatened to rain (which he heartily wished it would, as she had come on foot, and unattended), and so, in short, it came to pass that this very discreet couple were to be seen absolutely walking arm-in-arm toward Bullion House, at the slowest possible pace, and by the most circuitous route that could suggest itself to the flurried mind of Elliott. An instinctive sense of propriety, or rather prudence, led him to quit her arm just before arriving at that turn of the road which brought them full in sight of her father's house. There they parted, each satisfied as to the nature of the other's feelings, though nothing had then passed between them of an explicit or decisive character.

It is not necessary for me to dwell on this part of their history. Where there is a will, it is said, there is a way; and the young and venturesome couple found, before long, an opportunity of declaring to each other their mutual feelings. Their meetings and correspondence were contrived and carried on with the utmost difficulty. Great caution and secrecy were necessary to conceal the affair from Mr. Hillary, and those whose interest it was to give him early information on every matter that in any way concerned him. Miss Hillary buoyed herself up with the hope of securing, in due time her mother, and obtaining her intercessions with her stern and callous-hearted father. Some three months, or thereabouts, after the Sundy just mentioned, Mr. Hillary returned from the city, and made his appearance at dinner, in an unusually gay and lively humor. Miss Hillary was at a loss to conjecture the occasion of such an exhibition; but imagined it must be some great speculation of his which had proved unexpectedly successful. He occasionally directed toward her a kind of grim leer, as though longing to com-



municate tidings which he expected to be as gratifying to her as they were to himself. They dined alone; and as she was retiring rather earlier than usual, in order to attend upon her mother, who had that day been more than ordinarily indisposed, he motioned her to resume her seat.

“Well, Molly”—for that was the elegant version of her Christian name which he generally adopted when in a good humor—“well, Molly,” pouring out a glass of wine, as the servants made their final exit, “I have heard something to-day in the city—ahem! in which you are particularly concerned—very much so—and—so—ahem!—am I!” He tossed off half of his glass, and smacked his lips as though he unusually relished the flavor.

“Indeed, papa!” exclaimed the young lady, with an air of anxious vivacity, not attempting to convey to her lips the brimming wine-glass her father had filled for her, lest the trembling of her hand should be observed by him. “Oh, you are joking! what can I have to do with the city, papa?”

“Do? Aha, my girl! ‘What can you have to do in the city,’ ” good-humoredly attempting to imitate her tone, “indeed? Don’t try to play mock modest with me! You know as well as I do what I am going to say!” he added, looking at her archly, as he fancied, but so as to blanch her cheek and agitate her whole frame with an irresistible tremor. Her acute and feeling father observed her emotion. “There now, that’s just the way all you young misses behave on these occasions! I suppose it’s considered mighty pretty! As if it wasn’t all a matter of course for a young woman to hear about a young husband!”

“Papa, how you do love a joke!” replied Miss Hillary, with a sickly smile, making a desperate effort to carry her wine-glass to her lips, in which she succeeded, swallowing every drop that was in it, while her father electrified her by proceeding: “It’s no use mincing matters; the thing is gone too far.”

“Gone too far!” echoed Miss Hillary, mechanically.

“Yes, gone too far, I say, and I stick to it. A bargain’s a bargain all the world over, whatever it’s about; and a bargain I’ve struck to-day. You’re my daughter—my only daughter, d’ye see—and I’ve been a good while on the lookout for a proper person to marry you to; and, egad! to-day I’ve got him; my future son-in-law, d’ye hear, and one that will clap a coronet on my pretty Molly’s head; and on the day he does so, I do two things; I give you a plum, and myself cut Mincing Lane, and sink the shop for



the rest of my days. There's nuts for you to crack! Aha, Molly, what d'ye say to all this? An't it news?"

"Say! Why I—I—I—" stammered the young lady, her face nearly as white as the handkerchief on which her eyes were violently fixed, and with which her fingers were hurriedly playing.

"Why, Molly! What's the matter? What the —, ahem! are you gone so pale for? Gad, I see how it is; I have been too abrupt, as your poor mother has it! But the thing is as I said, that's flat, come what will, say it how one will, take it how you will! So make up your mind, Molly, like a good girl as you are; come, kiss me! I never loved you so much as now I'm going to lose you!"

She made no attempt to rise from her chair, so he got up from his own, and approached her.

"Adad, but what's the matter here? Your little hands are as cold as a corpse's. Why, Molly, what—what nonsense." He chucked her under the chin. "You're trying to frighten me, Molly, I know you are! ah-ha!" He grew more and more alarmed at her deadly paleness and apparent insensibility to what he was saying. "Well, now—" he paused, and looked anxiously at her. "Who would have thought," he added, suddenly, "that it would have taken the girl aback so? Come, come!" slapping her smartly on the back, "a joke's a joke, and I've had mine, but it's been carried too far, I'm afraid."

"Dear—dearest papa," gasped his daughter, suddenly raising her eyes, and fixing them with a steadfast brightening look upon his, at the same time catching hold of his hands convulsively, "so it is—a joke! a—joke—it is—it is;" and gradually sinking back in her chair, to her father's unspeakable alarm, she swooned. Holding her in his arms, he roared stoutly for assistance, and in a twinkling a posse of servants, male and female, obeying the summons, rushed pell-mell into the dining-room; the ordinary hubbub attendant on a fainting fit ensued—cold water sprinkled, eau de Cologne, volatile salts, etc. Then the young lady, scarce restored to her senses, was supported, or rather carried, by her maid to her own apartment, and Mr. Hillary was left to himself for the remainder of the evening, flustered and confounded beyond all expression. The result of his troubled ruminations was, that the sudden communication of such prodigious good fortune had upset his daughter with joy, and that he must return to the charge in a day or two, and break it to her more easily. The real fact was, that he had that day assured the Right Honorable Lord Viscount Scamp of his daughter's heart, hand, and fortune; and that exemplary personage had



agreed to dine at Bullion House on the ensuing Sunday, for the purpose of being introduced to his future viscountess, whose noble fortune was to place his financial matters upon an entirely new basis, at least for some time to come, and enable him to show his honest face once more in divers amiable coteries at C——'s and elsewhere. Old Hillary's dazzled eyes could see nothing but his lordship's coronet; and he had no more doubt about his right thus to dispose of his daughter's heart than he had about his right to draw upon Messrs. Cash, Credit, & Co., his bankers, without first consulting them to ascertain whether they would honor his drafts.

Miss Hillary did not make her appearance the next morning at her father's breakfast-table, her maid being sent to say that her young lady had a violent headache, and so forth; the consequence of which was, that the old gentleman departed for the city in a terrible temper, as every member of this establishment could have testified if they had been asked. Miss Hillary had spent an hour or two of the preceding midnight in writing to Elliott a long and somewhat incoherent account of what had happened. She gave but a poor account of herself to her father at dinner that day. He was morosely silent. She pale, absent, disconcerted.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Mary?" inquired Mr. Hillary, with stern abruptness, as soon as the servants had withdrawn; "what were all those tantrums of yours about last night, eh?"

"Indeed, papa," replied his trembling daughter, "I hardly know; but really, you must remember you said such very odd things, and so suddenly and you looked so angry."

"Tut, girl, pho! Fiddle faddle!" exclaimed her father, gulping down a glass of wine with great energy. "I could almost—ahem!—really, it looked as if you had taken a little too much, eh? What harm was there in me telling you that you were going soon to be married? What's a girl born and bred up for but to be married? Eh, Mary?" continued her father, determined, this time, to go to work with greater skill and tact than on the preceding evening. "I want an answer, Mary!"

"Why, papa, it was a very odd thing now, was not it?" said his daughter, with an affectionate smile, drawing nearer to her father, her knees trembling, however, the while; "and I know you did it only to try whether I was a silly vain girl! Why should I want to be married, papa, when you and my poor mamma are so kind to me?"

"Humph!" grunted her father, gulping down a great glass of



claret. "And d'ye think we're to live forever? I must see you established before long, for my health, hem! hem! is none of the strongest" (he had scarcely ever known what an hour's illness was in his life, except his late accident, from which he had completely recovered); "and as for your poor mother, you know—" A long pause ensued here. "Now, suppose," continued the wily tactician, "suppose, Molly," looking at her very anxiously, "suppose I wasn't in a joke last night, after all?"

"Well, papa—"

"Well, papa!" echoed her father, sneeringly and snappishly, unable to conceal his ill humor; "but it isn't 'well, papa,' I can't understand all this nonsense. Mary, you must not give yourself airs. Did you ever hear—ahem!"—he suddenly stopped short, sipped his wine, and paused, evidently intending to make some important communication, and striving, at the same time, to assume an unconcerned air—"did you ever hear of the Right Honorable the Lord Viscount Scamp, Molly?"

"Yes; I've seen things about him now and then in the newspapers. Isn't he a great gambler, papa?" inquired Miss Hillary, looking at her father calmly.

"No, it's a lie," replied her father, furiously, whirling about the ponderous seals of his watch. "Has any one been putting this into your head?"

"No one, indeed, papa, only the newspapers—"

"And you are such an idiot as to believe newspapers? Didn't they say, a year or two ago, that my house was in for £20,000 when Gumarabic & Co. broke? And wasn't that a great lie? I didn't lose a fiftieth of the sum! No," he added, after a long pause, "Lord Scamp is no such thing. He's a vastly agreeable young man, and takes an uncommon interest in city matters, and that's saying no small thing for a nobleman of his high rank. Why, it's said he may one day be a duke!"

"Indeed, papa! And do you know him?"

"Y—y—es! Know him? Of course! Do you think I come and talk up at Highbury about everybody I know? Know Lord Scamp? He's an ornament to the peerage."

"How long have you known him, papa?"

"How long, puss? Why this—a good while! However, he dines here on Sunday."

"Dines here on Sunday! Lord Scamp dines here next Sunday? Oh, papa! this is another joke of yours!"

"Curse me, then, if I can see it! What the deuce is there so odd



in my asking a nobleman to dinner, if I think it proper? Why, if it comes to that, I can buy up a dozen of them any day, if I choose;" and he thrust his hands deeply into his breeches pockets.

"Yes, dear papa, I know you could, if they were worth buying," replied Miss Hillary, with a faint smile. "Give me a great merchant before a hundred good-for-nothing lords!" and she rose, put her hands about his neck and kissed him fondly.

"Well—I—I don't think you're so vastly far off the mark there, at any rate, Polly," said her father, with a subdued air of exultation; "but at the same time, you know, there may be lords as good as any merchant in the city of London—hem! and, after all, a lord's a superior article, too, in respect of birth and breeding."

"Yes, papa, they're all well enough, I dare say, in their own circles; but in their hearts, depend upon it, they only despise us poor citizens."

"Us poor citizens—I like that!" drawled her father, pouring out his wine slowly with a magnificent air, and drinking it off in silence. "You shall see, however, on Sunday, Poll! whether you're correct—"

"What! am I to dine with you?" inquired Miss Hillary, with irrepressible alarm.

"You to dine with us? Of course you will! Why the devil should not you?"

"My poor mamma—"

"Oh—ahem! I mean—nonsense—you can go to her after dinner. Certainly, you must attend to her."

"Very well, papa, I will obey you, whatever you like," replied Miss Hillary, a sudden tremor running from head to foot.

"That's a dear good girl—that's my own Poll! And hearken," he added, with a mixture of good humor and anxiety, "make yourself look handsome; never mind the cost; money's no object, you know? So tell that pert minx, your maid Joliffe, that I expect she'll turn you out first-rate that day, if it's only to save the credit of us—poor—merchants!"

"Gracious, papa, but why are you really so anxious about my dressing so well?"

Her father, who had sat swallowing glass after glass with unusual rapidity, at the same time unconsciously mixing his wines, put his finger to the side of his nose, and winked in a very knowing manner. His daughter saw her advantage in an instant; and with the ready tact of her sex resolved at once to find out all that was in her father's heart concerning her. She smiled as cheerfully as she



could, and affected to enter readily into all his feelings. She poured him out one or two glasses more of his favorite wine, and chattered as fast as himself, till she at length succeeded in extracting from him an acknowledgment that he had distinctly promised her to Lord Scamp, whose visit, on the ensuing Sunday, would be paid to her as to his future wife. Soon after this, she rang for candles; and kissing her father who had fairly fallen asleep, she withdrew to her own room, and there spent the next hour or two in confidential converse with her maid Joliffe.

Sunday came, and, true enough, with it Lord Scamp; a handsome heartless coxcomb, whose cool, easy assurance, and business-like attentions to Miss Hillary, excited in her a disgust she could scarcely conceal. In vain was her father's eager and anxious eye fixed upon her; she maintained an air of uniform indifference; listened almost in silence, the silence of contempt, to all the lisping twaddle uttered by her would-be lover, and so well acted, in short, the part she had determined upon, that his lordship, as he drove home, felt somewhat disconcerted at being thus foiled for, as he imagined, the first time in his life; and her father, after obsequiously attending his lordship to his cab, summoned his trembling daughter back from her mother's apartment into the drawing-room, and assailed her with a fury she had never known him to exhibit, at least toward any member of his family.

From that day might be dated the commencement of a kind of domestic reign of terror, at the hitherto quiet and happy Bullion House. The one great aim of her father concerning his daughter and his fortune had been—or rather seemed on the point of being—frustrated by that daughter. But he was not lightly to be turned from his purpose. He redoubled his civilities to Lord Scamp, who kept up his visits with a systematic punctuality, despite the contemptuous and disgustful air with which the young lady constantly received him. The right honorable *roué* was playing, indeed, for too deep a stake—an accomplished and elegant girl, with a hundred thousand pounds down, and nearly double that sum, he understood, at her father's death—to admit of his throwing up the game, while the possibility of a chance remained. Half the poor girl's fortune was already transferred, in Lord Scamp's mind, to the pockets of half a dozen harpies at the turf and the table; so he was, as before observed, very punctual in his engagements at Bullion House, with patient politeness continuing to pay the most flattering attentions to Miss Hillary—and her father. The latter was kept in a state of constant fever. Conscious of the transparent contempt exhibited by his



daughter toward her noble suitor, he could at length hardly look his lordship in the face, as day after day, he obsequiously assured him that "there wasn't anything in it"—and that for all his daughter's nonsense, he already "felt himself a lord's father-in-law!"

Miss Hillary's life was becoming intolerable, subjected as she was to such systematic persecution, from which, at length, the sick-chamber of her mother scarce afforded her a momentary sanctuary. A thousand times she formed the desperate determination to confess all to her father, and risk the fearful consequences: for such she dreaded they would be, knowing well her father's disposition, and the terrible frustration of his favorite schemes which was taking place. Such constant anxiety and agitation, added to confinement in her mother's bed-chamber, sensibly affected her health; and at the suggestion of Elliott, with whom she contrived to keep up a frequent correspondence, she had at length determined upon opening the fearful communication to her father, and so be at all events delivered from the intolerable presence and attentions of Lord Scamp.

By what means it came to pass, neither she nor Elliott were ever able to discover; but on the morning of the day she had fixed for her desperate *dénouement*, Mr. Hillary, during the temporary absence of his daughter, returned from the city about two o'clock most unexpectedly, his manner disturbed, and his countenance pale and distorted. Accompanied by his solicitor, he made his way at once to his daughter's apartment, with his own hand seized her desk and carried it down to the drawing-room, and forced it open. Frantic with fury, he was listening to one of Elliott's fondest letters to his daughter being read by his solicitor as she unconsciously entered the drawing room, in walking attire. It would be in vain to attempt describing the scene that immediately ensued. Old Hillary's lips moved, but his utterance was choked by the tremendous rage which possessed him, and forced him almost to the verge of madness. Trembling from head to foot, and his straining eyes apparently starting from their sockets, he pointed in silence to a little heap of opened letters lying on the table, on which stood also her desk. She perceived that all was discovered—and with a smothered scream fell senseless upon the floor. There, as far as her father was concerned, she might have continued; but his companion sprung to the bell, lifted her inanimate form from the floor, and gave her to the entering servants, who instantly bore her to her own room. Mr. Jeffreys the solicitor, a highly respectable man, to whom Mr. Hillary had hurried the instant that he recovered from the first shock occasioned by discovering his daughter's secret, vehemently



expostulated with his client on hearing the violent and vindictive measures he threatened to adopt toward his daughter and Elliott; for the tone of the correspondence which then lay before him had satisfied him of the fatal extent to which his daughter's affections were engaged.

Now her treatment of Lord Scamp was accounted for! Her dreadful agitation on first hearing his intention concerning that young nobleman and herself was explained. So here was his fondest hope blighted—the sole ambition of his life defeated—and by one of his own—his inferior servants—an outer clerk on his establishment at Mincing Lane! Confounded by a retrospect into the last few months, “Where have been my eyes—my common sense?” he groaned; “the devil himself has done it all, and made me assist in it! Oh, I see! I remember! Those cursed days when he came up from the city to me—and when—I must always have her with me! There the mischief was begun—oh, it's clear as the daylight! I've done it! I've done it all! And now, by ——! I'll undo it all!” Mr. Jeffreys at length succeeded in subduing the excitement of his client, and bringing him to converse calmly on the painful and embarrassing discovery that had been made. Innumerable were the conjectures as to the means by which this secret acquaintance and correspondence had been carried on. Every servant in the house was examined—but in vain. Even Joliffe, his daughter's maid, came at length, however strongly suspected, still undiscovered, out of the fierce and searching scrutiny. Poor Mrs. Hillary's precarious situation even did not exempt her from the long and angry inquiries of her exasperated husband. She had really, however, been entirely unacquainted with the affair.

The next morning Elliott was summoned from the city to Bullion House, whither he repaired accordingly about twelve o'clock, little imagining the occasion of his summons; for Miss Hillary had not communicated to him the intention she had formed of breaking the matter to her father, nor had she any opportunity of telling him of the alarming discovery that had taken place. He perceived, nevertheless, certain symptoms of disturbance in the ominous looks of the porter who opened the hall door and the servant who conducted him to the drawing room, where he found Mr. Hillary and another gentleman—Mr. Jeffreys—seated together at a table covered with papers, both of them obviously agitated.

“So, sir,” commenced Mr. Hillary, fixing his furious eyes upon Elliott as he entered, “your villainy's found out, deep as you are!”

“Villainy, sir!” echoed Elliott, indignantly, but turning very pale.



"Yes, sir, villainy! villainy! d——ble villainy! ay, it's all found out! Ah—ah—you cursed scoundrel!" exclaimed Mr. Hillary, with quivering lips and shaking his fist at Elliott.

"For God's sake, Mr. Hillary, be calm!" whispered Mr. Jeffreys, and then addressed Elliott with a quiet severity—"Of course Mr. Elliott, you are aware of the occasion of this dreadful agitation on the part of Mr. Hillary?" Elliott bowed with a stern inquisitive air, but did not open his lips.

"You beggarly brute—you filthy d——d upstart—you—you—" stammered Mr. Hillary, with uncontrollable fury, "your father was a scoundrel before you, sir—he cut his throat, sir!"

Elliott's face whitened in an instant, his expanding eye settled upon Mr. Hillary, and his chest heaved with mighty emotion. It was happy for the old man that Elliott at length recollected in him the father of Mary Hillary. He turned his eye for an instant toward Mr. Jeffreys, who was looking at him with an imploring, compassionate expression; Elliott saw and felt that he was thunderstruck at the barbarity of his client. Elliott's eye remained fixed upon Mr. Jeffreys for nearly a minute, and then filled with tears. Mr. Jeffreys muttered a few words earnestly in the ear of Mr. Hillary, who seemed also a little staggered at the extent of his last sally.

"Will you take a seat, Mr. Elliott?" said Mr. Jeffreys, mildly. Elliott bowed, but remained standing, his hat grasped by his left hand with convulsive force. "You will make allowance, sir," continued Mr. Jeffreys, "for the dreadful agitation of Mr. Hillary, and reflect that your own conduct has occasioned it."

"So you dare think of marrying my daughter, eh?" thundered Mr. Hillary, as if about to rise from his chair. "By ——, but I'll spoil your sport though. I'll be even with you!" gasped the old man, and sunk back panting in his seat.

"You can not really be in earnest, sir," resumed Mr. Jeffreys, in the same calm and severe tone and manner in which he had spoken from the first, "in thinking yourself entitled to form an attachment and alliance to Miss Hillary?"

"Why am I asked these questions, sir, and in this most extraordinary manner?" inquired Elliott, firmly. "Have I ever said one single syllable?"

"Oh, spare your denials, Mr. Elliott," said Jeffreys, pointing with a bitter smile to the letters lying open on the table at which he sat; "these letters of yours express your feelings and intentions pretty plainly. Believe me, sir, everything is known!"

"Well, sir, and what then?" inquired Elliott, haughtily; "those



letters, I presume, are mine, addressed to Miss Hillary!" Jeffreys bowed. "Well, then, sir, I now avow the feelings those letters express. I have formed, however unworthy myself, a fervent attachment to Miss Hillary, and I will die before I disavow it."

"There! hear him! hark to the fellow! I shall go mad—I shall!" almost roared Mr. Hillary, springing out of his chair, and walking to and fro between it and that occupied by Mr. Jeffreys, with hurried steps and vehement gesticulations. "He owns it! he does! the—" and he uttered a perfect volley of execrations. Elliott submitted to them in silence. Mr. Jeffreys again whispered energetically into the ear of his client, who resumed his seat, but with his eyes fixed on Elliott, and muttering vehemently to himself.

"You see, sir, the wretchedness that your most unwarrantable—your artful—nay, your wicked and presumptuous conduct has brought upon this family. I earnestly hope that it is not too late for you to listen to reason—to abandon your insane projects." He paused, and Elliott bowed. "It is in vain," continued Mr. Jeffreys, pointing to the letters, "to conceal our fears that your attentions must have proved acceptable to Miss Hillary; but we give you credit for more honor, more good sense than will admit of your carrying further this most unfortunate affair, of your persisting in such a wild—I must speak plainly—such an audacious attachment, one that is utterly unsuitable to your means, your prospects, your station, your birth, your education—"

"You will be pleased, sir, to drop the last two words," interrupted Elliott, sternly.

"Why, you fellow! why, you're my clerk! I pay you wages! You're a hired servant of mine!" exclaimed Hillary, with infinite contempt.

"Well, sir," continued Jeffreys, "this affair is too important to allow of our quarreling about words. Common sense must tell you that under no possible view of the case can you be a suitable match for Miss Hillary; and, therefore, common honesty enjoins the course you ought to pursue. However, sir," he added, in a sharper tone, evidently piqued at the composure and firmness maintained by Elliott, "the long and short of it is, that this affair will not be allowed to go further, sir. Mr. Hillary is resolved to prevent it—come what will!"

"Ay, so help me, God!" ejaculated Mr. Hillary, casting a ferocious glance at Elliott.

"Well, sir," said Elliott, with a sigh, "what would you have me do? Pray, proceed, sir."



"Immediately renounce all pretensions," replied Mr. Jeffreys, eagerly, "to Miss Hillary; return her letters—pledge yourself to discontinue your attempts to gain her affections, and I am authorized to offer a foreign situation connected with the house you at present serve, and to guarantee you a fixed income of £500 a year."

"Ay!—hark'ee, Elliott, I'll do all this, so help me, God!" suddenly interrupted Mr. Hillary, casting a look of imploring agony at Elliott, who bowed respectfully, but made no reply.

"Suppose, sir," continued Mr. Jeffreys, with an anxious and disappointed air, "suppose, sir, for a moment, that Miss Hillary were to entertain equally ardent feelings toward you with those which, in these letters, you have expressed to her—can you, as a man of honor—of delicacy—of spirit—persevere with your addresses where the inevitable consequence of success on your part must be her degradation from the sphere in which she has hitherto moved—her condemnation to straitened circumstances—perhaps to absolute want—for life! For believe me, sir, if you suppose that Mr. Hillary's fortune is to supply you both with the means of defying him—to support you in a life, on her part, of frightful ingratitude and disobedience, and on yours of presumption and selfishness, you will find yourself awfully mistaken!"

"He's speaking the truth—by — he is!" said Mr. Hillary, striving to assume a calm manner. "If you do come together after all this, d—n me if I don't leave every penny I have in the world to a hospital—or to a jail—in which one of you may perhaps end your days, after all!"

"Perhaps, Mr. Elliott," resumed Jeffreys, "I am to infer from your silence that you doubt—that you disbelieve these threats. If so, I assure you, you are grievously and fatally mistaken; you do not, believe me, know Mr. Hillary as I know him and have known him these twenty years and upward. I solemnly and truly assure you that he will as certainly do what he says, and forever forsake you both, as you are standing now before us!" He paused. "Again, sir, you may imagine that Miss Hillary has property of her own—at her own disposal. Do not so sadly deceive yourself on that score! Miss Hillary has, at this moment, exactly £600 at her own disposal."

"Ay, only £600—that's the uttermost penny."

"And how long is that to last? Come, sir, allow me to ask you what you have to say to all this?" inquired Mr. Jeffreys, folding his arms, and leaning back in his chair, with an air of mingled chagrin and exhaustion. Elliott drew a long breath.



"I have but little to say, Mr. Jeffreys, in answer to what you have been stating," he commenced, with a melancholy but determined air. "However you may suspect me, and misconstrue and misrepresent my character and motives, I never in my life meditated a dishonorable action." He paused, thinking Mr. Hillary was about to interrupt him, but he was mistaken. Mr. Hillary was silently devouring every word that fell from Elliott, as also was Mr. Jeffreys. "I am here as a hired servant, indeed," resumed Elliott, with a sigh, "and I am the son of one who—who—was an unfortunate—" His eyes filled, and his voice faltered. For some seconds there was a dead silence. The perspiration stood on every feature of Mr. Hillary's agitated countenance. "But of course, all this is as nothing here." He gathered courage, and proceeded with a calm and resolute air. "I know how hateful I must now appear to you. I do deserve bitter reproof—and surely I have had it, for my presumption in aspiring to the hand and heart of Miss Hillary. I tried long to resist the passion that devoured me, but in vain. Miss Hillary knew my destitute situation; she had many opportunities of ascertaining my character; she conceived a noble affection for me—I returned her love; I was obliged to do it secretly, and as far as that goes I submit to my censure—I feel—I know that I have done wrong! If Miss Hillary choose to withdraw her affection from me, I will submit though my heart break. If, on the contrary, she continue to love me"—his eye brightened—"I am not cowardly or base enough to undervalue her love." (Here Mr. Hillary struggled with Mr. Jeffreys, who, however, succeeded in restraining his client.) "If Miss Hillary condescend to become my wife—"

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" groaned Mr. Hillary, clasping his hands upon his forehead; "open the windows, Mr. Jeffreys, or I shall be smothered. I am dying—I shall go mad!"

"I will retire, sir," said Elliott, addressing Mr. Jeffreys, who was opening the nearest window.

"No, but you sha'n't though," gasped Mr. Hillary; "you shall stop here"—he panted for breath. "Hark'ee, sir—d'ye hear, Elliott—listen"—he could not recover his breath. Mr. Jeffreys implored him to take time, to be cool. "Yes; now I'm cool enough—I've—taken time—to consider—I have! Hark'ee, sir—if you dare to think—of having—my daughter—and if she—is such a cursed fool—as to think of having—you"—he stopped for a few seconds for want of breath—"why—look'ee, sir—so help me God—you may both—both of you—and your children—if you have any—die in the streets—like dogs—I've done with you—both of you—"



not a farthing—not a morsel of bread—d—n me if I do!” Here he breathed like a hard-run horse. “Now, sir—like a thief as you are!—go on courting—my daughter—marry her! ruin her! go, and believe that all I’m saying is—a lie!—go, and hope—that, by and by, I’ll forgive you—and all that—try it, sir! Marry, and see whether I give in! I’ll teach you—to rob an old man—of his child! The instant you leave this house, sir—this gentleman—makes my will—he does!—and when I’m dead—you may both of you—go to Doctors’ Commons—borrow a shilling, if you can—and see if your names—or your children’s—are in it, ha, ha, ha!” he concluded, with a bitter and ghastly laugh, snapping his shaking fingers at Elliott. “Get away, sir—marry after this, if you dare!”

Elliott almost reeled out of the room, and did not fully recollect himself till the groom of his aristocratic competitor, Lord Scamp, whose cab was dashing up to the gates of Bullion House, shouted to him to get out of the way, or be driven over!

Elliott returned to his desk, at Mincing Lane, too much agitated and confused, however, to be able to attend to business. He therefore obtained a reluctant permission to absent himself till the morrow. Even the interval thus afforded, however, he was quite incapable of spending in the reflection required by the very serious situation in which he had been so suddenly placed. He could not bring his mind to bear distinctly upon any point of his interview with Mr. Hillary and Mr. Jeffreys; and at length, lost and bewildered in a maze of indefinite conjecture—of painful hopes and fears, he retired early to bed. There, after tossing about for several hours, he at length dropped asleep—and awoke at an early hour considerably refreshed and calmed. Well, then, what was to be done?

He felt a conviction that Mr. Hillary would be an uncompromising—an inexorable opponent of their marriage, however long they might postpone it with the hope of wearing out or softening away his repugnance to it; and that if they married in defiance of him, he would fulfill every threat he had uttered. Of these two points he felt as certain as of his existence.

He felt satisfied that Miss Hillary’s attachment to him was ardent and unalterable; and that nothing short of main force would prevent her from adopting any suggestion he might offer. As for himself, he was passionately—and his heart loudly told him disinterestedly attached to her; he could, therefore, as far as he himself was concerned, cheerfully bid adieu to all hopes of enjoying a shilling of her father’s wealth, and be joyfully content to labor for their



daily bread. But a fearful array of contingencies here presented themselves before him. Suppose they married, they would certainly have £600 to commence with; but suppose his health failed him, or from any other cause he should become unable to support himself, a wife, and—it might be—a large family, how soon would £600 disappear? And what would be then before them? His heart shrunk from exposing the generous and confiding creature whose love he had gained, to such terrible dangers. He would—he would—write to her, and entreat her to forget him—to obey the reasonable wishes of her father. He felt that Mr. Hillary had great and grievous cause for complaint against him; could make every allowance for his feelings, and forgive their coarse and extravagant manifestation; and yet, when he reflected upon some expressions he had let fall—upon the intense and withering scorn and contempt with which he had been treated, the more he looked at this view of the case, the more he felt the spirit of a man swelling within him. He never trod so firmly, nor carried himself so erectly, as he did on his way down to the city that morning.

But then again—what misery was poor Miss Hillary enduring! What cruel and incessant persecution was being inflicted upon her; but she, too, had a high and bold spirit; he kindled as he pursued his meditations; he felt that the consciousness of kindred qualities endeared her to him tenfold more even than before.

Thus he communed with himself, but at length he determined on writing the letter he had proposed, and did so that night.

He was not dismissed, as he had expected, from the service of Mr. Hillary, who retained him, at the suggestion of Mr. Jeffreys—that shrewd person feeling that he could then keep Elliott's movements more distinctly under his own eyes, and have more frequent opportunities of negotiating with him on behalf of Mr. Hillary. Elliott's position in the establishment was such as never brought him into personal contact with Mr. Hillary; and apparently no one but himself and Mr. Hillary were acquainted with the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. As before hinted, Mr. Jeffreys was incessant in his efforts, both personally and by letter, to induce Elliott to break off the disastrous connection; and, from an occasional note which Miss Hillary contrived—despite all the espionage to which she was subjected—to smuggle to him, he learned, with poignant sorrow, that his apprehensions of the treatment she would receive at the hands of her father were but too well founded. She repelled with an affectionate and indignant energy, his offers and proposals to break off the affair. She told him that her spirit rose with the



cruelty she suffered, and declared herself ready, if he thought fit, to fly from the scene of trouble, and be united to him forever. Many and many a sleepless night did such communications as these insure to Elliott. He saw infinite danger in attempting a clandestine marriage with Miss Hillary, even should she be a readily consenting party. His upright and manly disposition revolted from a measure so underhand, so unworthy, and yet, what other course lay open to them? His own position at the counting-house was becoming very trying and painful. It soon became apparent that, on some account or another, he was an object of almost loathing disregard to the august personage at the head of the establishment, and the consequence was, an increasing infliction of petty annoyances and hardships by those connected with him in daily business. He was required to do more than he had ever before been called upon to do, and felt himself the subject of frequent and offensive remark, as well as suspicion. The ill treatment of his superiors, however, and the impertinences of his equals and inferiors, he treated with the same patient and resolute contempt, conducting himself with the utmost vigilance and circumspection, and applying to business, however unjustly accumulated upon him, with an energy, perseverance, and good humor, that only the more mortified his unworthy enemies. Poor Elliott! why did he continue in the service of Hillary, Hungate, & Company? How utterly chimerical was the hope he sometimes entertained of its being possible that his exemplary conduct could ever make any impression upon the hard heart of Mr. Hillary!

Miss Hillary did really, as has been just stated, suffer a martyrdom at Bullion House, at the hands of her father. Every day caresses and curses were alternated, and she felt that she was in fact a prisoner—her every movement watched, her every look scrutinized. Mr. Hillary frequently caused to be conveyed to her reports the most false and degrading concerning Elliott; but they were such transparent fabrications, as of course to defeat the ends proposed. She found some comfort in the society of her mother, who, though for a long time feeling and expressing strong disapprobation of her daughter's attachment to Elliott, at length relented, and even endeavored to influence Mr. Hillary on their daughter's behalf. Her kind offices were, however, suddenly interrupted by a second attack of paralysis, which deprived her of the power of speech and motion. This dreadful shock, occurring at such a moment, was too much for Miss Hillary, who was removed from attending affectionately at the bedside of her unhappy mother, to her own room, where she lay for nearly a fortnight in a violent fever. So far from these domestic



trials tending, however, to soften the heart of Mr. Hillary, they apparently contributed only to harden it—to aggravate his hatred of Elliott—of him who had done so much to disturb, to destroy his domestic peace, his fondest wishes and expectations.

Lord Scamp continued his interested and flattering attentions to Mr. Hillary, with whom he was continually dining, and at length—a proof of the prodigious ascendancy he had acquired over Mr. Hillary—succeeded in borrowing from him a very considerable sum of money. Hillary soon apprized his lordship of the real nature of the hinderance to his marriage with Miss Hillary; and his lordship of course felt it his duty, not to speak of his interest, to foster and inflame the fury of his wished-for father-in-law against the obscure and presumptuous rival. Several schemes were proposed by this worthy couple for the purpose of putting an end to the pretensions and prospects of this “insolent *parvenu* of the outer counting-house.” An accidental circumstance at length suggested to them a plot so artful and atrocious, that poor Elliott fell a victim to it.

On returning to the counting-house, one day, from the little chop-house at which he had been swallowing a hasty and frugal dinner, he observed indications of some unusual occurrence. No one spoke to him; all seemed to look at him as with suspicion and alarm. He had hardly hung up his hat, and reseated himself at his desk, when a message was brought to him from Mr. Hillary, who required his immediate attendance in his private room. Thither, therefore, he repaired, with some surprise—and with more surprise beheld all the partners assembled, together with the head clerk, the solicitor of the firm, and one or two strangers. He had hardly closed the door after himself, when Mr. Hillary pointed to him, saying, “This is your prisoner—take him into custody.”

“Surrender, sir—you’re our prisoner,” said one of the two strangers, both of whom now advanced to him, one laying hold of his collar, the other fumbling in his pocket, and taking out a pair of handcuffs. Elliott staggered several paces from them on hearing the astounding language of Mr. Hillary, and but that he was held by the officer who grasped his collar, seemed likely to have fallen. He turned deadly pale. For a second or two he spoke not.

“Fetch a glass of water,” said Mr. Fleming, one of the partners, observing Elliott’s lips losing their color, and moving without uttering any sound. But he recovered himself from the momentary shock, without the aid of the water, which seemed to have been placed in readiness beforehand, so soon was it produced. Pushing aside the officer’s hand that raised the glass to his lips, he exclaimed,



"What is the meaning of this, sir? How dare you deprive me of my liberty, sir?"—addressing Mr. Hillary. "What am I charged with?"

"Embezzling the money of your employers," interposed the solicitor. As he spoke, poor Elliott fixed upon him a stare of horror, and after standing and gazing in silence for several moments, attempted to speak, but in vain; and fell in a kind of fit into the arms of the officers. When he had recovered, he was conducted to a hackney-coach which had been for some time in readiness, and conveyed to the police office; where, an hour or two afterward, Mr. Hillary, accompanied by Mr. Fleming, the solicitor, and two of Elliott's fellow-clerks, attended to prefer the charge. Elliott was immediately brought to the bar, where he stood very pale, but calm and self-possessed, his eyes fixed upon Mr. Hillary, with a steadfast searching look that nothing could have sustained but his indignant consciousness of innocence. He heard the charge preferred against him without uttering a word. The firm had reason for some time, it was said, to suspect that they were robbed by some member of their establishment; that suspicion fell at length upon the prisoner; that he was purposely directed that day to go unexpectedly to dinner, having been watched during the early part of the morning; that his desk was immediately opened and searched, and three five-pound notes, previously marked (and these produced so marked), found in his pocket-book, carefully hid under a heap of papers; that he had been several times lately seen with bank-notes in his hand, which he seemed desirous of concealing; that he had been very intimate with one of his fellow-clerks, who was now in Newgate, on a charge similar to the present; that the firm had been robbed to a considerable amount; that Elliott had only that morning been asked by one of the clerks, then present, to lend him some money, when the prisoner replied that he had not got £5 in the world. All this, and more, Elliott listened to without uttering a syllable.

"Well, sir," said one of the magistrates, "what have you to say to this very serious charge?"

"Say!—why can you believe it, sir?" replied Elliott, with a frank air of unaffected incredulity.

"Do you deny it, sir?" inquired the magistrate, coldly.

"Yes, I do! Peremptorily, indignantly! It is absurd! I rob my employers? They know better—that it is impossible!"

"Can you prove that this charge is false?" said the magistrate, with a matter-of-fact air. "Can you explain, or deny the facts that have just been sworn to?" Elliott looked at him, as if lost in



thought. "Do you hear me, sir?" repeated the magistrate, sternly; "you are not bound to say anything; and I would caution you against saying anything to criminate yourself." Still Elliott paused. "If you are not prepared, I will remand you for a week, before committing you to prison."

"Commit me to prison, sir!" repeated Elliott, with at once a perplexed and indignant air—"why, I am as innocent as yourself!"

"Then, sir, you will be able easily to account for the £15 found in your desk this morning?"

"Ah, yes—I had forgotten that—I deny the fact. They could not have been found in my desk—for I have not more than £4 and a few shillings in the world, till my next quarter's salary becomes due."

"But it is sworn here—you heard it sworn as well as I did—that the money was found there. Here are the witnesses—you may ask them any questions you think proper—but they swore to the fact most distinctly."

"Then, sir," said Elliott, with a start, as if electrified, with some sudden thought—"I see it all! Oh, God, I now see it all! It was placed there on purpose! It is a plot laid to ruin me!" He turned round abruptly toward Mr. Hillary, and fixing a piercing look upon him, he exclaimed in a low voice, "Oh, monster!" He was on the eve of explaining Mr. Hillary's probable motives—but the thought of his daughter suddenly sealed his lips. "Sir," said he, presently, addressing the magistrate, "I take God to witness that I am innocent of this atrocious charge. I am the victim of a conspiracy—commit me, sir—commit me at once. I put my trust in God—the Father of the fatherless!"

The magistrates seemed struck with what he had said, and much more with his manner of saying it. They leaned back and conferred together for a few minutes. "Our minds are not quite satisfied," said the one who had already spoken, "as to the propriety of immediately committing the prisoner to Newgate. Perhaps stronger evidence may be brought forward in a few days. Prisoner, you are remanded for a week."

"I hope, sir," said Mr. Hillary, "that he will by that time be able to clear his character—nothing I wish more. It's a painful thing to me and my partners to have to press such a charge as this; but we must protect ourselves from the robbery of servants!" This was said by the speaker to the magistrates; but he did not dare to look at the prisoner, whose piercing indignant eye he felt to be fixed on him, and to follow his every motion.



That day week Elliott was fully committed to Newgate; and on the next morning the following paragraph appeared in the newspapers:

“—— Street. Henry Elliott, a clerk in the house of Hillary, Hungate & Company, Mincing Lane (who was brought to this office a week ago, charged with embezzling the sum of £15, the money of his employers, and suspected of being an accomplice of the young man who was recently committed to Newgate from this office on a similar charge), was yesterday fully committed for trial. He is, we understand, a young man of respectable connections and excellent education. From his appearance and demeanor he would have seemed incapable of committing the very serious offense with which he stands charged. He seemed horror-struck on the charge being first preferred, and asseverated his innocence firmly and in a very impressive manner, declaring that he was the victim of a conspiracy. In answer to a question of the magistrate, one of his employers stated, that up to the time of preferring this charge, the prisoner had borne an excellent character in the house.”

The newspaper containing this paragraph found its way, on the evening of the day on which it appeared, into Miss Hillary's room, through her maid, as she was preparing to undress, and conveyed to her the first intimation of poor Elliott's dreadful situation. The moment she had read it, she sprung to her feet, pushed aside her maid, who attempted to prevent her quitting her apartment, and with the newspaper in her hand, flew wildly down the stairs and burst into the dining-room, where her father was sitting alone, in his easy-chair, drawn close to the fire. “Father!” she almost shrieked, springing to within a yard or two of where he was sitting—“Henry Elliott robbed you! Henry Elliott in prison! A common thief!” pointing to the newspaper, with frantic vehemence. “Is it so? And you his accuser? Oh, no! no! never!” she exclaimed, a wild smile gleaming on her pallid countenance, at the same time sweeping to and fro before her astounded father, with swift but stately steps, continuing, as she passed and repassed him, “No, sir! no! no! no! Oh, for shame! for shame, father! Shame on you! shame! His father dead! his mother dead! No one to feel for him! no one to protect him! no one to love him—but—me!” And accompanying the last few words with a loud and thrilling laugh, she fell at full length insensible upon the floor.

Her father sat cowering in his chair, with his hands partially elevated—feeling as though an angry angel had suddenly flashed upon his guilty privacy; and when his daughter fell, he had not the



power to quit his chair and go to her relief for several seconds. A horrible suspicion crossed his mind, that she had lost her reason; and he spent the next hour and a half in a perfect ecstasy of terror. As soon, however, as the apothecary summoned to her assistance had assured him that there were, happily, no grounds for his fears—that she had had a very violent fit of hysterics, but was now recovered, and fallen asleep—he ordered the horses to his carriage, and drove off at top speed to the chambers of his city solicitor, Mr. Newington, to instruct him to procure Elliott's instant discharge. That, of course, was utterly impossible; and Mr. Hillary, almost stupefied with terror, heard Mr. Newington assure him that the King of England himself could not accomplish such an object! That Elliott must now remain in prison till the day of trial—about a month or six weeks hence—and then be brought to the bar as a felon; but there were but two courses to be pursued on that day, either not to appear against the prisoner, and forfeit all the recognizances, or to appear in open court, and state that the charge was withdrawn, and that it had been founded entirely on a mistake. That even then, in either case, Elliott, if really innocent (Mr. Newington was no party whatever to the fraudulent concoction of the charge, which was confined to Mr. Hillary and Lord Scamp), would bring an action at law against Mr. Hillary, and obtain, doubtless, very large damages for the disgrace, and danger, and injury which Mr. Hillary's unfounded charge had occasioned him; or, more serious still, he might perhaps indict all the parties concerned for a conspiracy.

“But,” said Mr. Hillary, almost sick with fright at this alarming statement of the liabilities he had incurred, “I would not wait for an action to be brought against me—I would pay him any sum you might recommend, and that, too, instantly on his quitting the prison walls.”

“But, pardon me, Mr. Hillary—why all this?”

“Oh—something of very great importance has just happened at my house, which—which—gives me quite a different opinion. But I was saying I would pay him instantly—”

“But if the young man be spirited, and conscious of his innocence, and choose to set a high value upon his character, he will insist on clearing it in open court, and dare you to the proof of your charges before the whole world—at least I should do so in such a case.”

“You would—would you, sir?” exclaimed Mr. Hillary, angrily, the big drops of perspiration standing upon his forehead.



"Certainly—certainly—I should, indeed; but let that pass. I really don't see—" continued Mr. Newington, anxiously.

"D—n him, then!" cried Mr. Hillary, desperately, after a pause, snapping his fingers, "let him do his worst! He can never find me out."

"Eh? what?" interrupted Newington, briskly, "find you out? What can you mean, Mr. Hillary?"

"Why—a—" stammered Mr. Hillary, coloring violently, adding something that neither he himself nor Mr. Newington could understand. The latter had his own surmises—somewhat vague, it is true—as to the meaning of Mr. Hillary's words—especially coupling them, as he did instantly, with certain expressions he had heard poor Elliott utter at the police office. He was a prudent man, however, and seeing no particular necessity for pushing his inquiries further, he thought it best to let matters remain as Mr. Hillary chose to represent them.

Six weeks did poor Elliott lie immured in the dungeons of Newgate, awaiting his trial—as a felon. What pen shall describe his mental sufferings during that period? Conscious of the most exalted and scrupulous integrity—he who had never designedly wronged a human being, even in thought—whom dire necessity only had placed in circumstances which exposed him to the devilish malice of such a man as Hillary—who stood alone, and with the exception of one fond heart, friendless in the world—whose livelihood depended on his daily labor, and who had hitherto supported himself with decency, not to say dignity, amid many grievous discouragements and hardships—this was the man pining amid the guilty gloom of the cells of Newgate, and looking forward each day with shuddering to the hour when he was to be dragged with indignity to the bar, and perhaps found guilty, on perjured evidence, of the shocking offense with which he was charged! And all this was the wicked contrivance of Mr. Hillary—the father of his Mary! And was he liable to be transported—to quit his country ignominiously and forever—to be banished with disgust and horror from the memory of her who had once so passionately loved him—as an impostor—a villain—a felon! He resolved not to attempt any communication with Miss Hillary, if indeed it were practicable; but to await, with stern resolution, the arrival of the hour that was either to crush him with unmerited but inevitable infamy and ruin, or expose and signally punish those whose malice and wickedness had sought to effect his destruction. What steps could he take to defend himself? Where were his witnesses? Who would detect and expose



the perjury of those who would enter the witness box on behalf of his wealthy prosecutors? Poor soul! Heaven support thee against thy hour of trouble, and then deliver thee!

Miss Hillary's fearful excitement, on the evening when she discovered Elliott's situation, led to a slow fever, which confined her to her bed for nearly a fortnight; and when, at the end of that period, she again appeared in her father's presence, it was only to encounter — despite her wan looks—a repetition of the harsh and cruel treatment she had experienced ever since the day on which he had discovered her reluctance to receive the addresses of Lord Scamp. Day after day did her father *bait* her on behalf of his lordship—with alternate coaxing and cursing: all was in vain—for when Lord Scamp at length made her a formal offer of his precious “hand and heart,” she rejected him with a quiet contempt which sent him, full of the irritation of wounded conceit, to pour his sorrows into the inflamed ear of her father.

The name that was written on her heart—that was constantly in her sleeping and waking thoughts, Elliott—she never suffered to escape her lips. Her father frequently mentioned it to her, but she listened in melancholy, oftener indignant silence. She felt convinced that there was foul play on the part of her father connected with Elliott's incarceration in Newgate, and could sometimes scarcely conceal, when in his presence, a shudder of apprehension. And was it likely—was it possible—that such a measure toward the unhappy, persecuted Elliott, could have any other effect on the daughter, believing him, as she did, to be pure and unspotted, than to increase and deepen her affection for him—to present his image before her mind's eye, as that of one enduring martyrdom on her account, and for her sake?

At length came on the day appointed for Elliott's trial, and it was with no little trepidation that Mr. Hillary, accompanied by Lord Scamp, stepped into his carriage, and drove down to the Old Bailey, where they sat together on the bench till nearly seven o'clock, till which time the court was engaged upon the trial of a man for forgery. Amid the bustle consequent upon the close of this long trial, Hillary, after introducing his noble friend to one of the aldermen, happened to cast his eyes to the bar which had been just quit-  
ted by the death-doomed convict he had heard tried, when they fell upon the figure of Elliott, who seemed to have been placed there for some minutes, and was standing with a mournful expression of countenance, apparently lost in thought. Even Mr. Hillary's hard heart was almost touched by the altered appearance of his vic-



time, who was greatly emaciated, and seemed scarce able to stand erect in his most humiliating position.

Mr. Hillary knew the perfect innocence of Elliott; and his own guilty soul thrilled within him, as his eye encountered for an instant the steadfast but sorrowful eye of the prisoner. In vain did he attempt to appear to be conversing carelessly with Lord Scamp, who was himself too much agitated to attend to him! The prisoner pleaded not guilty. No counsel had been retained for the prosecution, nor did any appear for the defense. The court, therefore, had to examine the witnesses; and suffice it to say, that after about half an hour's trial, in the course of which Hillary was called as a witness, and trembled so excessively as to call forth some encouraging expressions from the bench, the judge who tried the case decided that there was no evidence worth a straw against the prisoner, and consequently directed the jury to acquit him, which they did instantly, adding their unanimous opinion, that the charge against him appeared both frivolous and malicious.

"Am I to understand, my lord, that I leave the court freed from all taint, from all dishonor?" inquired Elliot, after the foreman had expressed the opinion of the jury.

"Certainly—most undoubtedly you do," replied the judge.

"And if I think fit, I am at liberty hereafter to expose and punish those who have wickedly conspired to place me here on a false charge?"

"Of course you have your remedy against any one," replied the cautious judge, "whom you can prove to have acted illegally."

Elliott darted a glance at Mr. Hillary, which made his blood rush tumultuously toward his guilty heart, and bowing respectfully to the court, withdrew from the ignominious spot which he had been so infamously compelled to occupy. He left the prison a little after eight o'clock; and wretched indeed were his feelings as the turn-key, opening the outermost of the iron-bound and spiked doors, bade him farewell, gruffly adding, "Hope we mayn't meet again, my hearty!"

"I hope not, indeed!" replied Elliott, with a sigh; and descending the steps, found himself in the street. He scarce knew, for a moment, whither to direct his steps, staggering, overpowered with the strange feeling of suddenly recovered liberty. The sad reality, however, soon forced itself upon him. What was to become of him? He felt wearied and faint, and almost wished he had begged the favor of sleeping, for the night, even in the dreary dungeons from which he had been but that moment released. Thus his thoughts



were occupied, as he moved slowly toward Fleet Street, when a female figure approached him, muffled in a large shawl.

"Henry—dearest Henry!" murmured the half-stifled voice of Miss Hillary, stretching toward him both her hands; "so you are free! You have escaped from the snare of the wicked! Thank God—thank God! Oh, what have we passed through since we last met! Why, Henry, will you not speak to me? Do you forsake the daughter for the sin of her father?"

Elliott stood staring at her as if stupefied.

"Miss Hillary?" he murmured, incredulously.

"Yes—yes! I am Mary Hillary; I am your own Mary. But, oh, Henry, how altered you are! How thin! How pale and ill you look! I can not bear to see you!" And covering her face with her hands, she burst into a flood of tears.

"I can hardly—believe—that it is Miss Hillary," muttered Elliott. "But your father!—Mr. Hillary! What will he say if he sees you? Are you not ashamed of being seen talking to a wretch like me, just slipped out of Newgate?"

"Ashamed? My Henry—do not torture me! I am heart-broken for your sake! It is my own flesh and blood that I am ashamed of—that it could ever be so base!"

Elliott suddenly snatched her into his arms, and folded her to his breast with convulsive energy.

If the malignant eye of her father had seen them at that moment!

She had obtained information that her father was gone to the Old Bailey with Lord Scamp, and soon contrived to follow them, unnoticed by the domestics. She could not get into the court, as the gallery was already filled; and had been lingering about the door for upward of four hours, making eager inquiries from those who left the court, as to the name of the prisoner who was being tried. She vehemently urged him to accompany her direct to Bullion House, confront her father, and demand reparation for the wrongs he had inflicted. "I will stand beside you—I will never leave you—let him turn us both out of his house together!" continued the excited girl. "I begin to loathe it—to feel indifferent about everything it contains—except my poor, unoffending, dying mother! Come, come, Henry, and play the man!" But Elliott's good sense led him to expostulate with her, and he did so successfully, representing to her the useless peril attending such a proceeding. He forced her into the coach that was waiting for her—refused the purse she had tried nearly fifty times to thrust into his hand—promised to make a point of writing to her the next day in such a



manner as should be sure of reaching her, and after mutually affectionate adieus, he ordered the coachman to drive off as quickly as possible toward Highbury. She found Bullion House in a tumult on account of her absence.

"So your intended victim has escaped!" exclaimed Miss Hillary, suddenly presenting herself before her father, whom Lord Scamp had just left.

"Ah, Polly—my own Poll—and is it you, indeed?" said her father, evidently the worse of wine, approaching her unsteadily. "Come, kiss me, love!—where—where have you been, you little puss—puss—puss—"

"To Newgate, sir!" replied his daughter, in a quick stern tone, and retreated a step or two from her advancing father.

"N—n—ewgate! New—new—gate!" he echoed, as if the word had suddenly sobered him. "Well—Mary—and—what of that!" he added, drawing his breath heavily.

"To think that your blood flows in these veins of mine!" continued Miss Hillary, with extraordinary energy, extending her arms toward him. "I call you father—and yet"—she shuddered—"you are a guilty man—you have laid a snare for the innocent—tremble, sir! tremble! Do you love your daughter? I tell you, father, that if your design had succeeded, she would have lain dead in your house within an hour after it was told her! Oh, what—what am I saying?—where have I been?" She pressed her hand to her forehead; her high excitement had passed away. Her father had recovered from the shock occasioned by her abrupt reappearance. He walked to the door, and shut it.

"Sit down, Mary," said he, sternly, pointing to the sofa. She obeyed him in silence.

"Now, girl, tell me—are you drunk or sober?—where have you been?—what have you been doing?" he inquired, with a furious air. She hid her face in her hands, and wept.

"You are driving me mad, father!" she murmured.

"Come, come! What!—you're playing the coward now, miss! Where is all your bold spirit gone? What! can't you bully me any more? Snivel on then, and beg my forgiveness! What do you mean, miss," said he, extending toward her his clinched fist, "by talking about this fellow Elliott being—my victim? Eh? Tell me, you audacious hussy! you ungrateful vixen! what d'ye mean?—say, what the d——l has come to you?" She made no answer, but continued with her face concealed in her hands. "Oh—I'm up to all this! I see what you're after! I know you, young dare-devil!



You think you can bully me into letting you marry this brute—this beggar—this swindler! Ah-ha! you don't know me though! By —, but I believe you and he are in league to take my life!" He paused, gasping with rage. His daughter remained silent. "What has turned you so against me?" he continued, in the same violent tone and manner. "Haven't I been a kind father to you all my—"

"Oh yes, yes, yes! dear father, I know you have!" sobbed Miss Hillary, rising and throwing herself at his feet.

"Then why are you behaving in this strange way to me?" he inquired, somewhat softening his tone. "Mary, isn't your poor mother upstairs dying? and if I lose her and you too, what's to become of me?" Miss Hillary wept bitterly. "You'd better kill your old father outright at once than kill him in this slow way! or send him to a madhouse, as you surely will! Come, Molly—my own little Molly—promise me to think no more of this wretched fellow! Depend on't he'll be revenged on me yet and do me an injury if he can! Surely the devil himself sent the man across our family peace! I don't want you to marry Lord Scamp since you don't like him—not I! It's true, I have longed this many a year to marry you to some nobleman—to see you great and happy—but—if you can't fancy my Lord Scamp, why—I give him up. And if I give him up, won't you meet me half way, and make us all happy again by giving up this fellow so unworthy of you? He comes from a d——d bad stock, believe me! Remember—his father gambled, and cut his throat," added Hillary, in a low tone, instinctively trembling as he recollected the effect produced upon Elliott by his utterance of these words on a former occasion. "Only think, Molly! My daughter, with a vast fortune—scraped together during a long life by her father's hard labor—Molly—the only thing her father loves, excepting always your poor mother—to fling herself into the arms of a common thief—a jail-bird—a felon—a fellow on his way to the gallows!"

"Father!" said Miss Hillary, solemnly, suddenly looking up into her father's face, "you know that this is false! You know that he is acquitted—that he is innocent—you knew it from the first—that the charge was false!"

Mr. Hillary, who had imagined he was succeeding in changing his daughter's determination, was immeasurably disappointed and shocked at this evidence of his failure. He bit his lips violently and looked at her fiercely, his countenance darkening upon her sensibly. Scarce suppressing a horrible execration—turning a deaf ear to all her passionate entreaties on behalf of Elliott—he rose, forcibly de-



tached her arms, which were clinging to his knees, and rang the bell.

“Send Miss Hillary’s maid here,” said he, hoarsely. The woman, with a frightened air, soon made her appearance.

“Attend Miss Hillary to her room immediately,” said he, sternly, and his disconsolate daughter was led out of his presence to spend a night of sleepless agony.

“On bed

Delirious flung, sleep from her pillow flies;  
All night she tosses, nor the balmy power  
In any posture finds; till the gray morn  
Lifts her pale luster on the paler wretch  
Exanimate by love; and then, perhaps,  
Exhausted nature sinks awhile to rest,  
Still interrupted by distracted dreams,  
That o’er the sick imagination rise,  
And in black colors paint the mimic scene!”

Many more such scenes as the one above described followed between Mr. Hillary and his daughter. He never left her from the moment he entered till he quitted his house on his return to the city. Threats, entreaties, promises—magnificent promises—all the artillery of persuasion or coercion that he knew how to use, he brought to bear upon his wearied and harassed daughter, but in vain. He suddenly took her with him into Scotland; and after spending there a wretched week or two, returned more dispirited than he had left. He hurried her to every place of amusement he could think of. Now he would give party after party, forgetful of his poor wife’s situation; then let a week or longer elapse in dull and morose seclusion. Once he was carried by his passion to such a pitch of frenzy, that he struck her on the side of her head, and severely; nor manifested any signs of remorse when he beheld her staggering under the blow. But why stay to particularize these painful scenes? Was this the way to put an end to the obstinate infatuation of his daughter? No, but to increase and strengthen it; to add fuel to the fire. Her womanly pride, her sense of justice, came—powerful auxiliaries—to support her love of the injured Elliott. She bore his ill treatment at length with a kind of apathy. She had long lost all respect for her father, conscious as she was that he had acted most atrociously toward Elliott; and presently, after “some natural tears” for her poor mother, she became wearied of the monotonous misery she endured at Bullion House, and ready to fly from it.

Passing over an interval of a month or two, during which she continued to keep up some correspondence with Elliott, who never



told her the extreme misery, the absolute want he was suffering, since her father refused to give him a character such as would procure his admission to another situation, and he was therefore reduced to the most precarious means possible of procuring a livelihood. Miss Hillary overhearing her father make arrangements for taking her on a long visit to the Continent—where he might, for all she knew, leave her to end her days in some convent—fled that night in desperation from Bullion House, and sought refuge in the humble residence of an old servant of her father's. Here she lived for a few days in terrified seclusion; but she might have spared her alarms, for her father received the news of her flight with sullen apathy, merely exclaiming, "Well, as she has made her bed she must lie upon it." He made no inquiries after her, nor attempted to induce her to return. When at length apprised of her residence, he did not go near the house. He had evidently given up the struggle in despair and felt indifferent to any fate that might befall his daughter. He heard that the bans of marriage between her and Elliott were published in the parish church where her new residence was situated, but offered no opposition whatever. He affixed his signature when required to the document necessary to transfer to her the sum of £600—standing in her name in the funds, in sullen silence.

So this ill-fated couple were married, no one attending at the brief and cheerless ceremony but an early friend of Elliott's and the worthy couple from whose house Mrs. Elliott had been married.

Elliott had commenced legal proceedings against Mr. Hillary on account of his malicious prosecution. He was certain of success, and of thereby wringing from his reluctant and wicked father-in-law a very considerable sum of money—a little fortune, in his present circumstances. With a noble forbearance, however, and yielding to the entreaties of his wife, who had not lost, in her marriage, the feelings of a daughter toward her erring parent, he abandoned them; his solicitor writing, at his desire, to inform Mr. Hillary of the fact that his client had determined to discontinue proceedings, though he had had the certainty of success before him, and that for his wife's sake he freely forgave Mr. Hillary.

This letter was returned with an insolent message from Mr. Hillary, and there the affair ended.

A few days after her marriage, Mrs. Elliott received the following communication from Mr. Jeffreys:

"MADAM,—Mr. Hillary has instructed me to apprise you, as I now do with great pain, of his unalterable determination never again



to recognize you as his daughter, or receive any communication, of any description, from either your husband or yourself, addressed either to Mr. or Mrs. Hillary; whom your undutiful and ungrateful conduct, he says, has separated from you forever.

"He will allow to be forwarded to any place you may direct whatever articles belonging to you may yet remain at Bullion House, on your sending a list of them to my office.

"Spare me the pain of a personal interview on the matter; and believe me when I unfeignedly lament being the medium of communicating such intelligence.

"I am, madam,

"Your humble servant,

"JONATHAN JEFFREYS."

With a trembling hand, assisted by her husband, she set down a few articles—books, dress, one or two jewels, and her little dog Cato. Him, however, Mr. Hillary had caused to be destroyed the day after he discovered her flight. The other articles were sent to her immediately; and with a bitter fit of weeping did she receive them, and read the fate of her merry little favorite, who had frisked about her to the last with sportive affection, when almost everybody else scowled at and forsook her. Thus closed forever, as she too surely felt, all connection and communication with her father and mother.

Elliott regarded his noble-spirited wife, and well he might, with a fondness bordering on idolatry. The vast sacrifice she had made for him overpowered him whenever he adverted to it, and inspired him, not only with the most tender and enthusiastic affection and gratitude, but with the most eager ambition to secure her, by his own efforts, at least a comfortable home. He engaged a small but respectable lodging in the borough, to which they removed the day after their marriage; and after making desperate exertions, he had the gratification of obtaining a situation as clerk in a respectable mercantile house in the city, and which he had obtained through the friendly but secret services of one of the members of the firm he had last served. His superior qualifications secured him a salary of £90 a-year, with the promise of its increase if he continued to give satisfaction. Thus creditably settled, the troubled couple began to breathe a little more freely; and in the course of a twelvemonth, Mrs. Elliott's poignant grief first declined into melancholy, which was at length mitigated into a pensive if not cheerful resignation. She moved in her little circumscribed sphere as if she had never occupied one of splendor and affluence. How happily passed the hours they spent together in the evening after he had quitted the scene of his daily labors, he reading or playing on his flute, which



he did very beautifully, and she busily employed with her needle! How they loved their neat little parlor, as they sometimes involuntarily compared it; she, with the spacious and splendid apartments which had witnessed so much of her suffering at Bullion House—he, with the dreadful cells of Newgate! And their Sundays! What sweet and calm repose they brought! How she loved to walk with him after church hours in the fresh and breezy places—the parks; though a pang occasionally shot through her heart when she observed her father's carriage, he the solitary occupant, rolling leisurely past them! The carriage in which she and her little Cato had so often driven! But thoughts such as these seldom intruded; and when they did, only drove her closer to her husband—a pearl to her, indeed—if it may not be irreverently spoken—of great price—a price she never once regretted to have paid.

Ye fond, unfortunate souls! what days of darkness were in store for you!

About eighteen months after their marriage, Mrs. Elliott, after a lingering and dangerous accouchement, gave birth to a son, the little creature I had seen. How they consulted together about the means of apprising Mr. Hillary of the birth of his grandson, and faintly suggested to each other the possibility of its melting the stern stubborn resolution he had formed concerning them! He heard of it, however, manifesting about as much emotion as he would on being told by his housekeeper of the kitting of his kitchen cat! The long fond letter she had made such an effort to write to him, and which poor Elliott had trudged all the way to Highbury to deliver, with trembling hand and beating heart, to the porter of Bullion House, was returned to them the next morning by the two-penny post, unopened! What delicious agony was it to them to look at, to hug to their bosoms, the little creature that had no friend, no relative on earth but them! How often did his little blue eye open surprisedly upon her as her scorching tear dropped upon his tiny face!

She had just weaned her child, and was still suffering from the effects of nursing, when there happened the first misfortune that had befallen them since their marriage. Mr. Elliott was one night behind his usual hour of returning from the city, and his anxious wife's suspense was terminated by the appearance of a hackney coach, from which there stepped out a strange gentleman, who instantly knocked at the door, and returned to assist another gentleman in lifting out the apparently inanimate figure of her husband. Pale as death, she rushed down stairs, her child in her arms, and



was saved from fainting only by hearing her husband's voice, in a low tone, assuring her that he was "not much hurt"—that he had had "a slight accident." The fact was, that in attempting most imprudently to shoot across the street between two approaching vehicles, he was knocked down by the pole of one of them, a post chaise; and when down, before the postboy could stop, one of the horses had kicked the prostrate passenger upon his right side. The two humane gentlemen who had accompanied him home, did all in their power to assuage the terrors of Mrs. Elliott. One of them ran for the medical man who fortunately lived close at hand; and he pronounced the case to be, though a serious one, and requiring great care, not attended with dangerous symptoms, at least, at present.

His patient never quitted his bed for three months; at the end of which period, his employers sent a very kind message, regretting the accident that had happened, and still more, that they felt compelled to fill up his situation in their house, as he had been now so long absent, and was likely to continue absent for a much longer time: and they at the same time paid him all the salary that was due, in respect of the period during which he had been absent, and a quarter's salary beyond it. Poor Elliott was thrown by this intelligence into a state of deep despondency, which was increased by his surgeon's continuing to use the the language of caution, and assuring him (disheartening words!) that he must not think of engaging in active business for some time yet to come. It was after a sleepless night that he and his wife stepped into a hackney-coach and drove to the bank to sell out £50 of their precious store, in order to liquidate some of the heavy expenses attendant on his long illness. Alas! what prospect was there either of replacing what they now took, or of preserving the remainder from similar diminution! It was now that this admirable wife acted indeed the part of a guardian angel: soothing by her fond attentions his querulous and alarmed spirit; and, that she might do so, struggling hourly to conceal her own grievous apprehensions, her own despondency. As it may be supposed, it had now become necessary to practice the closest economy in order to keep themselves out of debt, and to avoid the necessity of constantly drawing upon the very moderate sum which yet stood in his name in the funds. How often, nevertheless, did the fond creature risk a chiding, and a severe one, from her husband, by secretly procuring for him some of the little delicacies recommended by their medical attendant, and in which no entreaties could ever prevail upon her to share!



Some time after this, her husband recovered sufficiently to be able to walk out; but being peremptorily prohibited from engaging for some time to come in his old situation, or any one requiring similar efforts, he put an advertisement in the newspapers, offering to arrange the most involved merchant's accounts, etc., "with accuracy and expedition," at his own residence, and on such very moderate terms as soon brought him several offers of employment. He addressed himself with a natural but most imprudent eagerness to the troublesome and even exhausting task he had undertaken; and the consequence was, that he purchased the opportunity of a month's labor by a twelvemonth's emancipation from all labor! A dreadful blow this was, and borne by neither of them with their former equanimity. Mrs. Elliott renewed her hopeless attempt to soften the obduracy of her father's heart. She waited for him in the street at the hours of his quitting and returning to the city, and attempted to speak to him, but he hurried from her as from a common street-beggar. She wrote letter after letter, carrying some herself, and sending others by the post, by which latter medium all were invariably returned to her! She began to think with horror on her father's inexorable disposition; and her prayers to Heaven for its interference on her behalf, or at least the faith that inspired them, became fainter and fainter.

Mr. Hillary's temper had become ten times worse than ever since his daughter's departure, owing to that as well as several other causes. Several of his speculations in business proved to be very unfortunate, and to entail harassing consequences; which kept him constantly in a state of feverish irritability. Poor Mrs. Hillary continued still a hopeless paralytic, deprived of the powers both of speech and motion; all chance, therefore, of her precious intercession was forever at an end. In vain did Mrs. Elliott strive to interest several of her relatives in her behalf: they professed too great a dread of Mr. Hillary to attempt interfering in such a delicate and dangerous matter; and really had a very obvious interest in continuing, if not increasing, the grievous and unnatural estrangement existing between him and his daughter. There was one of them, a Miss Gubbley, a maiden aunt or cousin of Mrs. Elliott, that had wormed herself completely into Mr. Hillary's confidence, and having been once a kind of housekeeper in the establishment, now reigned supreme at Bullion Lodge: an artful, selfish, vulgar person, an object to Mrs. Elliott of mingled terror and disgust, this was the being that,

"Toadlike, sat squatting at the ear"



of her father, probably daily suggesting every hateful consideration that could tend to widen the breach already existing between him and his daughter. This creature, too, had poor Mrs. Elliott besieged with passionate and humiliating entreaties, till they were suddenly and finally checked by a display of such intolerable insolence and heartlessness as determined Mrs. Elliott, come what would, to make no further efforts in that quarter. She returned home, on the occasion just alluded to, worn out in body and mind. A copious flood of tears accompanying her narration to her husband of what had happened, relieved her excitement; she took her child into her arms and his playful little fingers unconsciously touching the deep responsive chords of a mother's heart, she forgot in the ecstasy of the moment, as she folded him to her bosom, all that had occurred to make her unhappy and add to the gloom of their darkening prospects. Closer and closer now became their retrenchments, cutting off every source of expenditure that was not absolutely indispensable. None occasioned them, she told me, a greater pang than giving up their little pew in —— Church, and betaking themselves Sunday after Sunday to the humbler and more appropriate sittings provided in the aisle. But was this their communion, their compact with poverty, unfavorable to devotion? No. The serpent pride was crushed, and dared not lift his bruised head to disturb or alarm! God then drew near to the deserted couple, "weary and heavy laden," and "cast out" by their earthly father! Yes, there she experienced a calm, a resignation, a reality in the services and duties of religion, which she had never known when sitting amid the trappings and ostentation of wealth in the gorgeous pew of her father!

They were obliged to seek a cheaper lodging—moderate as was the rent required for those they had so long occupied—where they might practice a severer economy than they chose to exhibit in the presence of those who had known them when such sacrifices were not necessary, and which also had the advantage of being in the neighborhood of a person who had promised Elliott occasional employment as a collector of rents, etc., as well as the balancing of his books every month. Long before his health warranted did he undertake these severe labors, driven to desperation by a heavy and not over-reasonable bill delivered him by his medical attendant, and of which he pressed for the payment. With an aching heart poor Elliott, sold out sufficient to discharge it, and resolved at all hazards to recommence his labors; for there was left only £70 or £80 in the bank, and he shuddered when he thought of it. They had quitted this their second lodging for that in which I found them about three



months before her first visit to me, in order to be near another individual, himself an accountant, who had promised to employ Elliott frequently as a kind of deputy or fag. His were the books piled before poor Elliott when first I saw him! Thus had he been engaged, to the great injury of his health, for many weeks, his own mental energy and determination flattering him with a delusive confidence in his physical vigor!

Poor Mrs. Elliott also had contrived, being not unacquainted with ornamental needle-work, to obtain some employment of that description. Heavy was her heart as she sat toiling beside her husband, who was busily engaged in such a manner as would not admit of their conversing together, when her thoughts wandered over the scenes of their past history, and anticipated their gloomy prospects. Was she now paying the fearful penalty of disobedience? But where was the sin she had committed in forming an honest and ardent attachment to one who she was satisfied was every way her equal save in wealth? How could her father have a right to dictate to her heart who should be an object of her affections? To dispose of it as of an article of merchandise? Had he any right thus to consign her to perpetual misery? To unite her to a titled scoundrel merely to gratify his weak pride and ambition? Had she not a right to resist such an attempt? The same Scripture that has said, "Children, obey your parents," has also said, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." But had she not been too precipitate, or unduly obstinate in adhering to the man her father abhorred? Ought anything to have caused her to fly from her suffering mother! Oh, what might have been her sufferings! But surely nothing could justify or extenuate the unrelenting spirit which actuated her father! And that father she knew to have acted basely, to have played the part of a devil toward the man whom he hated; perhaps, nay probably, he was meditating some equally desperate scheme concerning herself. She silently appealed to God from amid this conflict of her thoughts and feelings, and implored his forgiveness of her rash conduct. Her agonies were heightened by the consciousness that there existed reasons for self-condemnation: but she thought of, she looked at, her husband, and her heart told her that she should act similarly were the past again to happen.

So, then, here were this virtuous unhappy couple—he declining in health just when that health was most precious; she, too, worn out with labor and anxiety, and likely, alas! to bring another heir to wretchedness into the world, for she was considerably advanced in pregnancy; both becoming less capable of the labor which was be-



coming daily more essential, with scarcely £40 to fall back upon in the most desperate emergency. Such was the dreadful situation of Mr. and Mrs. Elliott soon after the period of my first introduction to them. It was after listening to one of the most interesting and melancholy narratives that the annals of human suffering could supply, that I secretly resolved to take upon myself the responsibility of appealing to Mr. Hillary in their behalf, hoping that for the honor of humanity my efforts would not be entirely unavailing.

He had quitted Bullion House within a twelvemonth after his daughter's flight, and removed to a spacious and splendid mansion in —— Square, in the neighborhood of my residence; and where—strange coincidence! I was requested to attend Mrs. Hillary, who at length seemed approaching the close of her long-protracted sufferings. Mr. Hillary had become quite an altered man since the defection of his daughter. Lord Scamp had introduced him freely into the society of persons of rank and station, who welcomed into their circles the possessor of so splendid a fortune; and he found, in the incessant excitement and amusement of fashionable society, a refuge from reflection, from the “compunctious visitings of remorse” which made his solitude dreadful and insupportable. I found him just such a man as I have already had occasion to describe him; a vain, vulgar, selfish, testy, overbearing old man; one of the most difficult and dangerous persons on earth to deal with in such a negotiation as that I had so rashly, but Heaven knows with the best intentions, undertaken.

“Well, Mr. Hillary,” said I, entering the drawing-room, where he was standing alone, with his hands in his pockets, at the window watching some disturbance in the square, “I am afraid I can't bring you any better news about Mrs. Hillary. She weakens hourly!”

“Ah, poor creature, I see she does—indeed!” he replied, sighing, quitting the window, and offering me one of the many beautiful chairs that stood in the splendid apartment. “Well, she has been a good wife to me, I must say—a very good wife, and I've always thought and said so.” Thrusting his hands into the pockets of his ample white waistcoat, he walked up and down the room. “Well, poor soul! she's had all that money could get her, doctor, however, and she knows it—that's a comfort—but it ain't money can keep death off, is it?”

“No, indeed, Mr. Hillary; but it can mitigate some of its terrors. What a consolation will it be for you hereafter to reflect that Mrs. Hillary has had everything your noble fortune could procure for her!”



"Ay, and no grudging neither! I'd do ten times what I have done—what's money to me? Poor Poll, and she's going! We never had a quarrel in our lives!" he continued, in a somewhat subdued tone. "I shall miss her when she is gone. I shall indeed. I could find many to fill her place, if I had a mind, I'll warrant me—but I—I—poor Poll!"

"Yes," I said, in answer to some general remark he had made, "we medical men do certainly see the worst side of human life. Pain—illness—death—are bad enough of themselves, but when poverty steps in too--"

"Ay, I dare say. Bad enough as you say—bad enough!"

"I have this very day seen a mournful instance of accumulated human misery; poverty, approaching starvation, and illness, distress of mind. Ah! Mr. Hillary, what a scene I witnessed yesterday!" I continued, with emotion; "a man who is well born, who has seen better—"

"Better days—ah, exactly. Double-refined misery, as they would say in the city. By the way, what a valuable charity that is! I'm a subscriber to it—for the relief of decayed tradesmen! One feels such a pleasure in it! I dare say now—I do believe—let me see—£200 would not cover what I get rid of one way or another in this kind of way every year. By the way, doctor, I'll ring for tea—you'll take a cup?" I nodded; and in a few minutes a splendid tea service made its appearance.

"Do you know, doctor, I've some notion of being remembered after I'm gone, and it has often struck me that if I were to leave what I have to build a hospital or something of that sort in this part of the town, it wouldn't be amiss."

"A noble ambition, sir, indeed. But, as I was observing, the poor people I saw yesterday—such misery! such fortitude!"

"Ah, yes! Proper sort of people, just the right sort to put into—ahem! Hillary's Hospital. It don't sound badly, does it?"

"Excellently well. But the fact is"—I observed that he was becoming rather fidgety, but I was resolved not to be beaten from my point—"I'm going, in short, Mr. Hillary, to take a liberty which nothing could warrant but—"

"You're going to beg, doctor, now ain't you?" he interrupted briskly; "but the fact is, my maxim has long been never to give a farthing in charity that any one shall know of but two people: I and the people I give to. That's my notion of true charity; and besides, it saves one a vast deal of trouble. But if you really think—if it really is a deserving case—why—ahem!—I might perhaps—"



Dr. —— is so well known for his charitable turn—now ain't this the way you begin upon all your great patients?" he continued, with an air of supreme complacency. I bowed and smiled, humoring his vanity. "Well, in such a case—hem! hem! I might once in a way, break in upon my rule," and he transferred his left hand from his waistcoat to his breeches pocket, "so there's a guinea for you. But don't on any account name it to any one. Don't, doctor, I don't want to be talked about; and we people that are known do get so many—"

"But, Mr. Hillary, surely I may tell my poor friends to whom your charity is destined the name of the generous—"

"Oh, ay! Do as you please for the matter of that. Who are they? What are they? Where do they live? I'm a governor of——," I trembled.

"They live at present in —— Street; but I doubt, poor things, whether they can stop there much longer, for their landlady is becoming very clamorous—"

"Oh, the old story! the old story! Landlords are generally, especially the smaller sort, such tyrants, ain't they?"

"Yes, too frequently such is the case! But I was going to tell you of these poor people. They have not been married many years, and they married very unfortunately." Mr. Hillary, who had for some time been sitting down on the sofa, here rose and walked rather more quickly than he had been walking before. "Contrary to the wishes of their family, who have forsaken them, and don't know what their sufferings now are—how virtuous—how patient! And they have got a child too, that will soon, I fear, be crying for the bread it may not get." Mr. Hillary was evidently becoming disturbed. I saw that a little of the color had fled from about his upper lip, but he said nothing, nor did he seem disposed to interrupt me. "I'm sure, by the way," I continued, as calmly as I could, "that if I could but prevail upon their family to see them, before it is too late, that explanations might—"

"What's the name of your friends, sir?" said Mr. Hillary, suddenly stopping, and standing opposite to me, with his arms almost akimbo and his eyes looking keenly into mine.

"Elliott, sir."

"I—I thought as much, sir!" he replied, dashing the perspiration from his forehead; "I knew what you were driving at! D—n it, sir—I see it all! You came here to insult me—you did, sir!" His agitation increased.

"Forgive me, Mr. Hillary; I assure you—"



"No, sir! I won't hear you, sir! I've heard enough, sir! Too much, sir! You've said enough, sir, to show me what sort of a man you are, sir! D—n it, sir—it's too bad!"

"You mistake me, Mr. Hillary," said I, calmly.

"No, I don't, sir, but you've cursedly mistaken me, sir. If you know these people, and choose to take up their—to—to—patronize, do, sir, d—n it! if you like, and haven't anything better to do!"

"Forgive me, sir, if I have hurt your feelings!"

"Hurt my feelings, sir? What d'ye mean, sir? Every man hurts my feelings that insults me, sir; and you have insulted me, sir!"

"How, sir!" I inquired, sternly, in my turn. "Oblige me, sir, by explaining these extraordinary expressions."

"You know well enough! I see through it. But if you—really, sir—you've got a guinea of mine, sir, in your pocket. Consider it your fee for this visit; the last I'll trouble you to pay, sir!" he stuttered, almost unintelligible with fury.

I threw his guinea upon the floor, as if its touch were pollution. "Farewell, Mr. Hillary," said I, deliberately, drawing on my gloves. "May your deathbed be as calm and happy as that I have this day attended up stairs for the last time."

He looked at me earnestly, as if staggered by the reflections I had suggested, and turned very pale. I bowed haughtily, and retired. As I drove home, my heated fancy struck out a scheme for shaming or terrifying the old monster I had quitted into something like pity or repentance, by attacking and exposing him in some newspaper; but by the next morning I perceived the many objections there were to such a course. I need hardly say that I did not communicate to the Elliotts the fact of my attempted intercession with Mr. Hillary.

It was grievous to see the desperate but unavailing struggle made by both of them to retrieve their circumstances and provide against the expensive and trying time that was approaching. He was slaving at his account books from morning to midnight, scarce allowing himself a few minutes for his meals; and she had become a mere fag to a fashionable milliner, undertaking all such work as could be done at her own residence, often sitting up half the night, and yet earning the merest trifle. Then she had also to look after her husband and child, for they could not afford to keep a regular attendant. Several articles of her husband's dress and her own and almost all that belonged to the child, she often washed at night with her own hands!

As if these unfortunate people were not sufficiently afflicted al-



ready—as if any additional ingredient in their cup of sorrow were requisite—symptoms of a more grievous calamity than had yet befallen poor Elliott began to exhibit themselves in him. His severe and incessant application, by day and night, coupled with the perpetual agitation and excitement of his nervous system, began to tell upon his eyesight. I found him, on one of my morning visits, laboring under great excitement; and on questioning him, I feared he had but too good reason for his alarm, as he described, with fearful distinctness, certain sensations and appearances which infallibly betokened, in my opinion, after examining his eyes, the presence of incipient amaurosis in both eyes. He spoke of deep-seated pains in the orbits—perpetual sparks and flashes of light—peculiar haloes seen around the candle—dimness of sight—and several other symptoms, which I found, on inquiry had been for some time in existence, but he had never thought of noticing them till they forced themselves upon his startled attention.

“Oh, my God!” he exclaimed, clasping his hands, and looking upward, “spare my sight! Oh, spare my sight—or what will become of me? Beggary seems to be my lot—but blindness to be added!” He paused, and looked the image of despair.

“Undoubtedly, I should deceive you, Mr. Elliott,” said I, after making several further inquiries, “if I were to say that there was no danger in your case. Unfortunately, there does exist ground for apprehending that, unless you abstain, and in a great measure, from so severely taxing your eyesight as you have of late, you will run the risk of permanently injuring it.”

“Oh, doctor! it is easy to talk!” he exclaimed, with involuntary bitterness, “of my ceasing to use and try my sight; but how am I to do it? How am I to live? Tell me that! Will money drop from the skies into my lap, or bread into the mouths of my poor wife and child? What is to become of us? Merciful God; and just at this time, too! My wife pregnant!”—I thanked God she was not present—“our last penny almost slipping from our hands—and I, who should be the stay and support of my family, becoming blind! Oh, God—oh, God, what frightful crimes have I committed to be punished thus? Would I had been transported or hanged,” he added, suddenly, “when the old ruffian threw me into Newgate! But!”—he turned ghastly pale—“if I were to die now, what good could it do?” At that moment the slow heavy wearied step of his wife was heard upon the stairs, and her entrance put an end to her husband’s exclamations. I entreated him to intermit, at least for a time, his attentions to business, and prescribed some active rem-



edies, and he promised to obey my instructions. Mrs. Elliott sat beside me with a sad exhausted air, which touched me almost to tears. What a situation—what a prospect was hers! How was she to prepare for her coming confinement? How procure the most ordinary comforts—the necessary attendance? Deprived as her husband and child must be for a time of her affectionate and vigilant attentions, what was to become of them? Who supply her place? Her countenance too plainly showed that all these dreadful topics constantly agitated her mind!

A day or two after this interview I brought them the intelligence I had seen in the newspapers of Mrs. Hillary's death, which I communicated to them very carefully, fearful of the effect it might produce upon Mrs. Elliott, in her critical situation. She wept bitterly; but the event had been too long expected by her to occasion any violent exhibition of grief. As they lay awake that night in melancholy converse, it suddenly occurred to Mrs. Elliott that the event which had just happened might afford them a last chance of regaining her father's affections, and they determined to seize the opportunity of appealing to his feelings when they were softened by his recent bereavement. The next morning the wretched couple set out on their dreary pilgrimage to —— Square—it being agreed that he should accompany her to within a door or two of her father's house, and there await the issue of her visit. With slow and trembling steps, having relinquished his arm, she approached the dreaded house, whose large windows were closed from the top to the bottom. The sight of them overcame her; and she paused for a moment, holding by the area railings.

What dark and bitter thoughts and recollections crowded in a few seconds through her mind! Here, in this great mansion, was her living—her tyrannical—her mortally offended father; here lay the remains of her poor good mother—whom she had fled from—whose last thoughts might perhaps have been about her persecuted daughter—and that daughter was now trembling like a guilty thing before the frowning portals of her widowed, and, it might be, inexorable father! She felt very faint, and beckoning hastily to her husband, he stepped forward to support her, and led her from the door. After slowly walking round the square she returned, as before, to the gloomy mansion of her father, ascended the steps, and with a shaking hand pulled the bell.

“What do you want, young woman?” inquired a servant from the area.

“I wish to see Joseph—is he at home?” she replied, in so faint a



voice that the only word audible in the area was that of Joseph, the porter, who had entered into her father's service in that capacity two or three years before her marriage. In a few minutes Joseph made his appearance at the hall door, which he softly opened.

"Joseph!—Joseph! I'm very ill," she murmured, leaning against the door post—"let me sit in your chair for a moment."

"Lord have mercy on me—my young mistress!" exclaimed Joseph, casting a hurried look behind him, as if terrified at being seen in conversation with her—and then hastily stepping forward he caught her in his arms, for she had fainted. He placed her in his great covered chair, and called one of the female servants, who brought up with her, at his request, a glass of water—taking the stranger to be some relative or friend of the porter's. He forced a little into her mouth, the maid loosed her bonnet string, and after a few minutes she uttered a deep sigh, and her consciousness returned.

"Don't hurry yourself, miss—ma'am I mean," stammered the porter, in a low tone; "you can stay here a little—I don't think any one's stirring but us servants—you see, ma'am, though I suppose you know—my poor mistress—" She shook her head and sobbed.

"Yes, Joseph, I know it! Did she—did she die easily?" inquired Mrs. Elliott, in a faint whisper, grasping his hand.

"Yes, ma'am," he answered, in a low tone; "poor lady, she'd been so long ailing, that no doubt death wasn't anything particular to her, like, and so she went out at last like the snuff of a candle, as one might say; poor old soul! we'd none of us, not my master even, heard the sound of her voice for months, not to say years even!"

"And my—my father, how does he—"

"Why he takes on about it, ma'am, certainly; but, you see, he's been so long expecting of it!"

"Do you think, Joseph," said Mrs. Elliott, hardly able to make herself heard, "that—that my father would be very—very angry, if he knew I was here—would he—see me?"

"Lord, ma'am!" exclaimed the porter, alarm overspreading his features; "it's not possible! You can't think how stern he is! You should have heard what orders he gave us all about keeping you out of the house! I know 'tis a dreadful hard case, ma'am," he continued, wiping a tear from his eye, "and many and many's the time we've all cried in the kitchen about—hush!" he stopped, and looked toward the stairs apprehensively; "never mind, ma'am,



it's nobody! But won't you come down and sit in the house-keeper's room! I'm sure the good old soul will rather like to see you, and then, you know, you can slip out of the area gate and be gone in no time!"

"No, Joseph," replied Mrs. Elliott, with as much energy as her weakness would admit of, "I will wait outside the street door if you think there is any danger, while you go and get this letter taken upstairs, and say I am waiting for an answer!" He took the letter, held it in his hand hesitatingly and shook his head.

"Oh, take it, good Joseph!" said Mrs. Elliott, with a look that would have softened a heart of stone; "it is only to ask for mourning for my mother! I have not money to purchase any!" His eyes filled with tears.

"My poor dear young mistress!" he faltered; his lip quivered, and he paused. "It's more than my place is worth; but I'll take it, nevertheless—that I will, come what will, ma'am! See if I don't! You see, ma'am," dropping his voice, and looking toward the staircase, "it isn't so much the old gentleman, after all, neither, but it's—it's Miss Gubbley that I'm afraid of! It is she, in my mind, that keeps him so cruel hard against you! She has it all her own way, here! You should see how she orders us servants about, ma'am, and has her eyes into everything that's going on; but I'll go and take the letter anyhow; and don't you go out of doors, unless you hear me cry, 'Hem!' on the stairs!" She promised to attend to this hint, as did also the female servant whom he left with her, and Joseph disappeared. The mention of Miss Gubbley excited the most painful and disheartening thoughts in the mind of Mrs. Elliott. Possibly it was now the design of this woman to strike a grand blow, and force herself into the place so recently vacated by poor Mrs. Hillary! Mrs. Elliott's heart beat fast, after she had waited for some minutes in agonizing anxiety and suspense, as she heard the footsteps of Joseph hastily descending the stairs.

"Well, Joseph," she whispered, looking eagerly at him.

"I can't get to see master, ma'am, though I've tried; have indeed, ma'am! I thought it would be so! Miss Gubbley has been giving it me, ma'am: she says it will cost me my place to dare to do such an audacious thing again—and I told her you was below, here, ma'am, and she might see you; but she tossed her head, and said it was of a piece with all your other shameful behavior to your poor, broken-hearted father, she did, ma'am"—Mrs. Elliott began to sob bitterly—"and she wouldn't on any account whatsoever



have him shocked at such a sad time as this, and that she knows it would be no use your coming"—his voice quivered—"and she says as how"—he could hardly go on—"you should have thought of all this long ago; and that only a month ago she heard master say it was all your own fault if you come to ruin, and as you'd made your bed you must lie on it—her very words, ma'am; but she's sent you a couple of guineas, ma'am, on condition that you don't on no account trouble master again, and—and," he continued, his tears overflowing, "I've been so bold as to make it three, ma'am; and I hope it's no offense, ma'am, me being but a servant," trying to force something, wrapped up in paper, into the hand of Mrs. Elliott, who had listened motionless and in dead silence to all he had been saying.

"Joseph!" at length she exclaimed, in a very low but distinct and solemn tone, stretching out her hands, "if you don't wish to see me die—help me, help me—to my knees!" And with his assistance, and that of the female servant, she sunk gently down upon her knees upon the floor, where he partly supported her. She slowly clasped her hands together upon her bosom, and looked upward; her eye was tearless, and an awful expression settled upon her motionless features. Joseph involuntarily fell upon his knees beside her, shaking like an aspen leaf, his eyes fixed instinctively upon hers, and the sobs of several of the servants, who had stolen silently to the top of the kitchen stairs, to gaze at this strange scene, were the only sounds that were audible. After having remained in this position for several minutes, she rose from her knees slowly and in silence.

"When will my mother be buried?"

"Next Saturday," whispered Joseph, "at two o'clock."

"Where?"

"At St. ——'s, ma'am."

"Farewell, Joseph! You have been very kind," said she, rising and moving slowly to the door.

"Won't you let me get you a little of something warm, ma'am? You do look so bad, ma'am, so pale, and I'll fetch it from downstairs in half a minute."

"No, Joseph, I am better! and Mr. Elliott is waiting for me at the outside."

"Poor gentleman!" sobbed Joseph, turning his head aside, that he might dash a tear from his eye. He strove again to force into her hand the paper containing the three guineas, but she refused.

"No, Joseph, I am very destitute, but yet Providence will not let



me starve. I can not take it from you; hers I will not, I ought not!"

With this the door was opened; and with a firmer step than she had entered the house, she quitted it. Her husband, who was standing anxiously at one or two doors' distance, rushed up to her, and with tremulous and agitated tone and gestures inquired the result of her application, and placing his arm around her, for he felt how heavily she leaned against him, gently led her toward home. He listened with the calmness of despair to her narrative of what had taken place. "Then there is no hope for us there," he muttered through his half-closed lips.

"But there is hope, dearest, with Him who invites the weary and the heavy laden; who seems to have withdrawn from us, but has not forsaken us," replied his wife, tenderly, and with unwonted cheerfulness in her manner. "I feel—I know—He tells me that He will not suffer us to sink in the deep waters! He heard my prayer, Henry, and He will answer it, wisely and well! Let us hasten home, dearest. Our little Henry will be uneasy, and trouble Mrs. ——" Elliott listened to her in moody silence. His darkening features told not of the peace and resignation Heaven had shed into the troubled bosom of his wife, but too truly betokened the gloom and despair within. He suspected that his wife's reason was yielding to the long-continued assaults of sorrow; and thought of her approaching sufferings with an involuntary shudder, and sickened as he entered the scene of them—his wretched lodging. She clasped their smiling child with cheerful affection to her bosom; he kissed him—but coldly—absently—as it were, mechanically. Placing upon his forehead the silk shade which my wife had sent to him, at my request, the day before, as well to relieve his eyes, as to conceal their troubled expression, he leaned against the table at which he took his seat, and thought with perfect horror upon their circumstances.

Scarce £20 now remained of the £600 with which they were married; his wife's little earnings were to be of course for a while suspended; he was prohibited, at the peril of blindness, from the only species of employment he could obtain; the last ray of hope concerning Hillary's reconciliation was extinguished; and all this when their expenses were on the eve of being doubled—or trebled.

It was well for Mrs. Elliott that her husband had placed that silk shade upon his forehead!

During his absence the next morning at the ophthalmic infirmary, whither, at my desire, he went twice a week to receive the advice



of Mr. —, the eminent oculist, I called and seized the opportunity of placing in Mrs. Elliott's hands, with unspeakable satisfaction, the sum of £40, which my good wife had chiefly collected among her friends; and as Mrs. Elliott read, or rather attempted to read, for her eyes were filled with tears, the affectionate note written to her by my wife, who begged that she would send her little boy to our house till she should have recovered from her confinement, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed—"Has not God heard my prayers! Dearest doctor! Heaven will reward you! What news for my poor heart-broken husband when he returns home from the infirmary—weary and disheartened!

"And now, doctor, shall I confide to you a plan I have formed?" said Mrs. Elliott, looking earnestly at me. "Don't try to persuade me against putting it into practice; for my mind is made up, and nothing can turn me from my purpose." I looked at her with surprise. "You know we have but this one room and the little closet—for what else is it?—where we sleep; and where must my husband and child be when I am confined? Besides, we can not, even with all your noble kindness to us, afford to have proper—the most ordinary attendance." She paused—I listened anxiously.

"So—I've been thinking—could you not"—she hesitated, as if struggling with violent emotion—"could you not get me admitted"—her voice trembled—"into—the lying-in hospital?" I shook my head, unable at the moment to find utterance.

"It has cost me a struggle—Providence seems, however, to have led me to the thought! I shall there be no expense to my husband, and shall have, I understand, excellent attendance."

"My poor dear madam," I faltered, "you must forgive me—but I can not bear to think of it." In spite of my struggles the swelling tears at length burst from my laden eyes. She buried her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly. "My husband can hear of me every day, and, with God's blessing upon us, perhaps in a month's time we may both meet in better health and spirits. And if—if—if it would not inconvenience Mrs. — or yourself, to let my little Henry"—she could get no further, and burst again into a fit of passionate weeping. I promised her, in answer to her reiterated entreaties, that I would immediately take steps to insure her an admission into the lying-in hospital at any moment she might require it.

"But, my dear madam, your husband—Mr. Elliott—depend upon it, will never hear of all this; he will never permit it, I feel perfectly certain."



“ Ah, doctor, I know he would not; but he shall not know anything about my intentions till I am safely lodged in the—the hospital. I intend to leave without his knowing where I am gone, some day this week; for I feel satisfied—” She paused and trembled. “ When he returns from the infirmary on Friday he will find a letter from me, telling him all my little scheme, and may God incline him to forgive me for what I am doing. I know he loves me, however, too fondly to make me unhappy!”

The next morning my wife accompanied me to their lodging, for the purpose of taking home with her little Henry. A sad scene it was; but Elliott, whom his wife had easily satisfied of the prudence of thus disposing of the child during the period of her confinement, bore it manfully. He carried the child down to my carriage, and resigned him into the hands of my wife and a servant, after many fond caresses, with an air of melancholy resolution; promising to call daily and see him while on his visit to my house. I strove to console him under this temporary separation from his child, and to impress upon him the necessity of absolute quiet and repose, in order to give due effect to the very active treatment under which he had been placed for the complaint in his eyes; this I did in order to prepare him for the second stroke meditated to be inflicted upon him on the ensuing Friday by his wife, and to reconcile him, by anticipation as it were, to their brief separation. When once the decisive step had been taken, I felt satisfied that he would speedily see the propriety of it.

It was wonderful to see how Mrs. Elliott, during the interval between this day and the Friday appointed for her entrance into the lying-in hospital, sustained her spirits. Her manner increased in tenderness toward her husband, who evinced a corresponding energy of sympathy and affection toward her. His anxieties had been to a considerable extent allayed by the seasonable addition to his funds already spoken of; but he expressed an occasional surprise at the absence of any preparations for the event which both of them believed to be so near at hand.

On the Friday morning, about half an hour after her husband had set out for the ophthalmic infirmary as usual, a hackney-coach drew up to the door of his lodging, with a female attendant, sent by my directions from the lying-in hospital. I also made my appearance within a few minutes of the arrival of the coach: and poor Mrs. Elliott, after having carefully arranged and disposed of the few articles of her own apparel which she intended to leave behind her, and given the most anxious and repeated instructions to the woman



of the house to be attentive to Mr. Elliott in her absence—sat down and shed many tears as she laid upon the table a letter, carefully sealed, and addressed to her husband, containing the information of her departure and destination. When her agitation had somewhat subsided, she left the room—perhaps, she felt, forever—entered into the coach, and was soon safely lodged in the lying-hospital.

The letter to her husband was as follows—for the melancholy events which will be presently narrated, brought this with other documents into my possession.

“MY SWEET LOVE,—The hour of my agony is approaching; and Providence has pointed out to me a place of refuge. I can not, dearest Henry—I can not think of adding to your sufferings by the sight of mine! When all is over—as I trust it will be soon, and happily—then we shall be reunited, and God grant us happier days! Oh, do not be grieved or angry, Henry, at the step I am taking. I have done it for the best—it will be for the best, depend upon it. Dr. — will tell you how skillfully and kindly they treat their patients at the lying-in hospital to which I am going. Oh, Henry! you are the delight of my soul! The more grief and bitterness we have seen together, surely the more do we love one another. Oh how I love you! How I prayed in the night while you, dearest, were sleeping, that the Almighty would bless you and our little Harry, and be merciful to me, for your sakes, and bring us all together again! I shall pray for you, my love—my own love!—every hour that we are away! Bear up a little longer, Henry! God has not deserted us—he will not—he can not if we do not desert him. I leave you, dearest, my Bible and prayer-book—oh, do read them! Kiss my little Harry in my name, every day. How kind are Dr. — and Mrs. —! Go out and enjoy the fresh air, and do not sit fretting at home, love; nor try your eyes with reading or writing till I come back. I can hardly lay by my pen, but the coach is come for me, and I must tear myself away. Farewell, then, my dear, dear, darling Henry; but only for a little while.

“Your doting wife,  
“MARY.

“P. S.—The socks I have been knitting for Harry are in the drawer near the window. You had better take them to Dr. —’s to-morrow, as I forgot to send them with Harry in the bustle of his going, and he will want them. Dr. — says you can come and see me every day before I am taken ill. Do come.”

I called in the evening, according to the promise I had made to Mrs. Elliott, on her husband, to see how he bore the discovery of his wife’s sudden departure.

“How is Mr. Elliott?” I inquired of the woman of the house, who opened the door. “Is he at home?”

“Why, yes—but he’s in a sad way, sir, indeed, about Mrs. Elliott’s going. He’s eaten nothing all day.”



He was sitting at a table when I entered, with a solitary candle, and Mrs. Elliott's letter lying before him.

"Oh! doctor, is not this worse than death?" he exclaimed. "Am I not left alone to be the prey of Satan?"

"Come, come, Mr. Elliott, moderate your feelings! Learn the lesson your incomparable wife has taught you—patience and resignation."

"It is a heavenly lesson. But can a fiend learn it?" he replied, vehemently, in a tone and with an air that quite startled me. "Here I am left alone by God and man to be the sport of devils, and I AM! What curse is there that has not fallen, or is falling upon me? I feel assured," he continued, gloomily, "that my Mary is taken from me forever. Oh, do not tell me otherwise. I feel—I know it! I have brought ruin upon her! I have brought her to beggary by an insane, a wicked attachment! The curses of disobedience to parents are fully upon both of us! Yet our misery might have touched any heart except that of her fiendish father. Ah! he buries her mother to-morrow! To-morrow, then, I will be there! The earth shall not fall upon her before he looks upon me! How I will make the old man shake beside the grave he must soon drop into!" He drew a long breath. "Let him curse me!—curse her—curse us both!—curse our child! There and then—"

"The curse causeless shall not come," I interrupted.

"Ay, causeless! That's the thing! Causeless!" He paused. "Forgive me," he added, after a heavy sigh, resuming his usual manner; "doctor, I've been raving, and can you wonder at it? Poor Mary's letter (here it is) has almost killed me! I have been to the place where she is, but I dared not go in to see her. Oh, doctor! will she be taken care of?" suddenly seizing my hand with convulsive energy.

"The very greatest care will be taken of her—the greatest skill in London will be instantly at her command in case of the slightest necessity for it—as well as every possible comfort and convenience that her situation can require. If it will be any consolation to you, I assure you I intend visiting her myself every day." And by these means I at length succeeded in restoring something like calmness to him. The excitement occasioned by his unexpected discovery of his wife's absence, and its touching reason, had been aggravated by the unfavorable opinion concerning his sight which had been that morning expressed—alas, I feared, but too justly—by the able and experienced oculist under whose care he was placed. He had in much alarm heard Mr. — ask him several questions respecting



peculiar and secret symptoms and sensations about the eyes, which he was forced to answer in the affirmative; and the alarming effect of these inquiries was not dissipated by the cautious replies of Mr. — to his questions as to the chances of ultimate recovery. I assured him that nothing on earth could so effectually serve him as the cultivation of calm and composed habits of mind; for that the affection of his eyes depended almost entirely upon the condition of his nervous system. I got him to promise me that he would abandon his wild and useless purpose of attending the funeral of Mrs. Hillary—said I would call upon him, accompanied by his little son, about noon the next day, and also bring him tidings concerning Mrs. Elliott.

I was as good as my word; but not he. The woman of the house told me that he had left home about twelve o'clock, and did not say when he would return. He had gone to St. —'s Church, I afterward learned from him. He watched the funeral procession into the church, and placed himself in a pew which commanded a near view of that occupied by the chief mourner, Mr. Hillary; who, however never once raised his head from the handkerchief in which his countenance was buried. When the body was borne to the grave, Elliott followed, and took his place beside the grave as near Mr. Hillary as the attendants and the crowd would admit of. He several times formed the determination to interrupt the service by a solemn and public appeal to Mr. Hillary on the subject of his deserted daughter—but his tongue failed him, his feelings overpowered him; and he staggered from where he stood to an adjoining tombstone, which he leaned against till the brief and solemn scene was concluded, and the mourners began to return. Once more, with desperate purpose, he approached the procession, and came up to Mr. Hillary just as he was being assisted into the coach.

"Look at me, sir," said he, suddenly tapping Mr. Hillary upon the shoulder. The old man seemed paralyzed for a moment, and stared at him as if he did not know the strange intruder.

"My name is Elliott, sir; your forsaken daughter is my heart-broken, starving wife! do you relent, sir?"

"Elliott! Keep him away—keep him away, for God's sake!" exclaimed Mr. Hillary, his face full of disgust and horror; and the attendants violently dragged the intruder from the spot where he was standing, and kept him at a distance till the coach containing Mr. Hillary had driven off. Elliott then returned home, which he reached about an hour after I had called. He paid me a visit in the evening, and I was glad to see him so much calmer than I had ex-



pected. He apologized with much earnestness for his breach of faith. He said he had found it impossible to resist the impulse which led him, in spite of all he had said overnight, to attend the funeral; for he had persuaded himself of the more than possibility that his sudden and startling appearance at so solemn a moment might effect an alteration in Mr. Hillary's feelings toward him. He gave me a full account of what had happened, and assured me with a melancholy air that he had now satisfied himself—had nothing to hope for further—nothing to disturb him—and he would attend to my injunctions and those of his surgical adviser at the infirmary. He told me that he had seen Mrs. Elliott about an hour before, and had left her in comparatively good spirits; but the people of the hospital had told him that her confinement was hourly expected.

"I wonder," said he, and sighed profoundly, "what effect her death would have upon Mr. Hillary? Would he cast off her children, as he had cast her off? Would his hatred follow her into the grave? Now what should you say, doctor?"

The matter-of-fact, not to say indifferent air, with which this very grave question was put, not a little surprised me. "Why, he must be obdurate indeed if such were to be the case," I answered. "I am in hopes, however, that, in spite of all that has happened, he will ere long be brought to a sense of his guilt and cruelty in so long defying the dictates of conscience—the voice of nature. When he finds himself alone—"

Elliott shook his head.

"It must be a thundering blow, doctor, that would make his iron heart feel—and—that blow"—he sighed—"may come much sooner, it may be—" He shuddered, and looked at me with a wild air of apprehension.

"Let us hope for the best, however, Mr. Elliott! Rely upon it, the present calmness of your inestimable wife affords grounds for the happiest expectations concerning the approaching—"

"Ah! I hope you may not be mistaken! Her former accouchement was a long and dangerous one."

"Perhaps the very reason why her present may be an easy one!" He looked at me mournfully.

"And suppose it to be so—what a home has the poor creature to return to after her suffering! Is not that a dreary prospect?"

It was growing late, however; and presently taking an affectionate leave of his son, who had been sitting all the while on his knees overpowered with drowsiness, he left.



Mrs. Elliott was taken ill on Sunday about midnight; and after a somewhat severe and protracted labor was delivered on Monday evening of a child that died a few minutes after its birth. Having directed the people at the hospital to summon me directly Mrs. Elliott was taken ill, I was in attendance upon her within an hour after her illness had commenced. I sent a messenger on Monday morning to Mr. Elliott, according to the promise I had given him immediately to send him the earliest information, with an entreaty that he would remain at home all day to be in readiness to receive a visit from me. He came down, however, to the hospital almost immediately after receiving my message; and walked to and fro before the institution, making anxious inquiries every ten minutes or quarter of an hour how his wife went on, and received ready and often encouraging answers. When I quitted her for the night, about an hour after her delivery, leaving her much exhausted, but, as I too confidently supposed, out of danger, I earnestly entreated Mr. Elliott, who continued before the institution gates in a state of the highest excitement, to return home, but in vain; and I left him with expressions of severe displeasure, assuring him that his conduct was absurd and useless—nay, criminally dangerous to himself. “What will become of your sight, Mr. Elliott—pray think of that!—if you will persist in working yourself up to this dreadful pitch of nervous excitement? I do assure you that you are doing yourself every hour mischief which—which it may require months, if not years, to remedy; and is it kind to her you love—to those you ought to consult—whose interests are dependent upon yourself—thus to throw away the chances of recovery? Pray, Mr. Elliott, listen, listen to reason, and return home!” He made me no reply, but wept, and I left, hoping that what I had said would soon produce the desired effect.

About four o'clock in the morning I was awaked by a violent ringing of the bell and knocking at the door; and on hastily looking out of the bedroom window, there was Mr. Elliott.

“What is the matter, there?” I inquired. “Is it you, Mr. Elliott?”

“Oh, doctor, doctor—for God's sake come! My wife, my wife! She's dying!—they have told me so! Come, doctor, oh, come!” Though I had been exceedingly fatigued with the labors of the preceding day, this startling summons soon dissipated my drowsiness, and in less than five minutes I was by his side. We ran almost all the way to the nearest coach-stand: and on reaching the hospital, found that there existed but too much ground for apprehension; for



about two o'clock very alarming symptoms of profuse hemorrhage made their appearance; and when I reached her bedside, a little after four o'clock, I saw, in common with the experienced resident accoucheur, who was also present, that her life was indeed trembling in the balance. While I sat watching, with feelings of melancholy interest and alarm, her snowy inanimate countenance, a tap on my shoulder from one of the female attendants attracted my eye to the door, where the chief matron of the establishment was standing. She beckoned me out of the room; and I noiselessly stepped out after her.

"The husband of this poor lady," said Mrs. —, "is in a dreadful state, doctor, in the street. The porter has sent up word that he fears the gentleman is going mad, and will be attempting to break open the gates; that he insists upon being shown at once into his wife's room, or at least within the house! Pray oblige me, doctor, by going down and trying to pacify him! This will never do, you know—the other patients—" I hastened down-stairs, and stepped quickly across the yard. My heart yearned toward the poor distracted being who stood outside the iron gates, with his arms stretched toward me through the bars.

"Oh, say, is she alive? Is she alive?" he cried, with a lamentable voice.

"She is, Mr. Elliott—but really—"

"Oh, she is alive? Are you telling me truly? Is she indeed alive?"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Elliott: but if you don't cease to make such a dreadful disturbance, your voice may reach her ear, and that would be instant death—indeed it would."

"I will! I will—but is she indeed alive? Don't deceive me!"

"This is the way he's been going on all night," whispered the watchman, who had just stepped up.

"Mr. Elliott, I tell you, truly, in the name of God, your wife is living—and I have not given up hope of her recovery."

"Oh, Mary! Mary! Mary! Oh, come to me, my Mary! You said that you would return to me!"

"Hadn't I better take him away, sir?" said the watchman. "The porter says he'll be awakening all the women in the hospital—shall I?"

"Let me stay—let me stay! I'll give you all I have in the world! I'll give you forty pounds—I will, I will," cried the unfortunate husband, clinging to the bars, and looking imploringly at me.



"Do not interfere—do not touch him, sir," said I, to the watchman.

"Thank you! God bless you!" gasped the wretched sufferer, extending his hands toward mine, and wringing them convulsively; then turning to the watchman, he added, in a lower tone, the most piteous I ever heard, "Don't take me away! My wife is here; she's dying—I can't go away—but I'll not make any more noise! Hush, hush! there is some one coming!" A person approached from within the building, and whispering a few hurried words in my ear, retired. "Mr. Elliott, shake hands with me," said I, "Mrs. Elliott is reviving! I told you I had hope! The accoucheur has this instant sent me word that he thinks the case has taken a favorable turn." He sunk down suddenly on his knees in silence; then grasped my hands through the bars, and shook them convulsively. He then, in the fervor of his frantic feeling, turned to the watchman, grasped his hands, and shook them.

"Hush! hush!" he gasped—"don't speak—it will disturb her! A single sound may kill her. Ah"—he looked with agonized apprehension at the mail coach which that moment rattled rapidly and loudly by. At length he became so much calmer, that after pledging myself to return to him shortly, especially if any unfavorable change should take place, I withdrew, and repaired to the chamber where lay the poor unconscious creature—the subject of her husband's wild and dreadful anxieties. I found that I had not been misinformed; and though Mrs. Elliott lay in the most precarious situation possible, with no sign of life in her pallid countenance, and no pulse discernible at her wrist, we had reason for believing that a favorable change had taken place. After remaining in silence by her side for about a quarter of an hour, during which she seemed to sleep, I took my departure, and conveyed the delightful intelligence to the poor sufferer without, that his hopes were justified by the situation in which I had left my sweet patient. I succeeded in persuading him to accompany me home, and restoring him to a little composure: but the instant that he swallowed a hasty cup of coffee, without waiting even to see his little boy, who was being dressed to come down as usual to breakfast, he left the house and returned to the hospital, where I found him, as before, on driving up about twelve o'clock, but walking calmly to and fro before the gates. What anguish was written in his features! But a smile passed over them—a joyful air, as he told me before I could quit my carriage, that all was still going on well. It was so, I ascertained; and on returning from the hospital, I almost forced him into my carriage, and



drove off to his lodging, where I stayed till he had got into bed, and had solemnly promised me to remain there till I called in the evening.

For three days Mrs. Elliott continued in the most critical circumstances; during which her husband was almost every other hour at the hospital, and at length so wearied every one with his anxious and incessant inquiries, that they would hardly give him civil answers any longer. Had I not twice bled him with my own hand, and myself administered to him soothing and lowering medicines, he would certainly, I think, have gone raving mad. On the fifth day Mrs. Elliott was pronounced out of danger, but continued, of course, in a very exhausted state. Her first inquiries were about her husband, then her little Henry: and on receiving a satisfactory answer, a sweet sad smile stole over her features, and her feeble fingers gently compressed mine. Before I quitted her, she asked whether her husband might be permitted to see her. I of course answered in the negative. A tear stole down her cheek, but she did not attempt to utter a syllable.

The pressure of professional engagements did not admit of my seeing Mr. Elliott more than once or twice during the next week. I frequently heard of him, however, at the hospital, where he called constantly three times a day, but had not yet been permitted to see Mrs. Elliott, who was considered, and in my opinion justly, unequal to the excitement of such an interview.

The dreadful mental agony in which he had spent the last fortnight, was calculated to produce the most fatal effects upon his eyesight; of which, indeed, he seemed himself but too conscious, for every symptom of which he had complained was most fearfully aggravated. Nevertheless, I could not prevail upon him—at least, he said; for the present—to continue his visits to the eye-infirmary. He said, with a melancholy air, that he had too many, and very different matters to attend to—and he must postpone, for the present, all attention to his own complaints. Alas! he had many other subjects of anxiety than his own ailments! Supposing his poor wife to be restored to him, even in a moderate degree of strength and convalescence—what prospect was before them? What means remained of obtaining a livelihood? What chance was there of her inexorable old father changing his fell purpose? Was his wife then to quit the scene of her almost mortal sufferings, only to perish before his eyes—of want? And her father wallowing in wealth—the thought was horrible! Elliott sat at home alone, thinking of these things, and shuddered; he quitted his home, and wandered through the



streets with vacant eye and blighted heart. "He wandereth abroad for bread, saying where is it? He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand."\*

*Friday.*—This morning my wife called, at my suggestion, to see Mrs. Elliott, accompanied by her little boy, whom I had perceived she was pining to see. I thought they might meet without affording ground for uneasiness as to the result.

"My little Harry!" exclaimed a low soft voice as my wife and child were silently ushered into the room where lay Mrs. Elliott, wasted almost to a shadow, her face and hands, said my wife, white as the lily. "Come, love, kiss me!" she faintly murmured; and my wife brought the child to the bedside, and lifting him upon her knee, inclined his face toward his mother. She feebly placed her arm around his neck, and pressed him to her bosom.

"Let me see his face!" she whispered, removing her arm.

She gazed tenderly at him for some minutes; the child looking first at her and then at my wife with mingled fear and surprise.

"How like his father!" she murmured—"kiss me again, love! Don't be afraid of your poor mother, Harry!" Her eyes filled with tears. "Am I so altered?" said she to my wife, who stammered yes and no in one breath.

"Has he been a good boy?"

"Very—very," replied my wife, turning aside her head, unable for a moment to look either mother or son in the face. Mrs. Elliott perceived my wife's emotion, and her chill fingers gently grasped her hand.

"Does he say his prayers?—you've not forgotten that, Henry?"

The child, whose little breast was beginning to heave, shook his head, and lisped a faint, "No, mamma."

"God bless thee, my darling!" exclaimed his mother, in a low tone, closing her eyes. "He will not desert thee, nor thy parents. He feeds the young ravens when they cry!" She paused, and the tears trembled through her almost transparent eyelids. My wife, who had with the utmost difficulty restrained her feelings, leaned over the poor sufferer, pressed her lips to her forehead, and gently taking the child with her, stepped hastily from the room. As soon as they had got into the matron's parlor, where my wife sat down for a few moments, her little companion burst into tears, and cried as if his heart would break. The matron tried to pacify him, but



in vain. "I hope, ma'am," said she, to my wife, "he did not cry in this way before his mother? Dr. — and Mr. — both say that she must not be agitated in any way, or they will not answer for the consequences." At this moment I made my appearance, having called, in passing, to pay a visit to Mrs. Elliott; but hearing how much her late interview had overcome her, I left, taking my wife and little Elliott—still sobbing—with me, and promising to look in, if possible, in the evening. I did do so, accordingly; and found her happily none the worse for the emotion occasioned by her first interview with her child since her illness. She expressed herself very grateful to me for the care which she said we had evidently taken of him—"and how like he grows to his poor father!" she added. "Oh! doctor, when may I see him? Do, dear doctor, let us meet, if it be but for a moment! Oh, how I long to see him! I will not be agitated. It will do me more good than all the medicine in this building!"

"In a few days' time, my dear madam, I assure you—"

"Why not to-morrow? Oh, if you knew the good that one look of his would do me—he does not look ill?" she inquired, suddenly.

"He—he looks certainly rather harassed on your account; but in other respects, he is—"

"Promise me—let me see for myself; oh bring him with you! I—I—I own I could not bear to see him alone—but in your presence—do, dear doctor! promise! I shall sleep so sweetly to-night if you will."

Her looks—her tender murmuring voice overcame me; and I promised to bring Mr. Elliott with me some time on the morrow. I bade her good-night.

"Remember, doctor!" she whispered as I rose to go.

"I will!" said I, and quitted the room, already almost repenting of the rash promise I had made. But who could have resisted her?

Sweet soul! what was to become of thee? Bred up in the lap of luxury, and accustomed to have every wish gratified, every want anticipated—what kind of scene waited thee on returning to thy humble lodging,

"Where hopeless Anguish pour'd her groan,  
And lonely Want retired to die"?

For was it not so? What miracle was to save them from starvation?

Full of such melancholy reflections, I walked home, resolving to leave no stone unturned on their behalf, and pledging myself and wife that the forty pounds we had already collected for the Elliotts,



from among our benevolent friends, should be raised to a hundred, however great might be the deficiency we made up ourselves.

*Saturday.*—I was preparing to pay some early visits to distant patients, and arranging so as to take Mr. Elliott with me on my return, which I calculated would be about two o'clock, to pay the promised visit to Mrs. Elliott, when my servant brought me a handful of letters which had that moment been left by the twopenny postman. I was going to cram them all into my pocket, and read them in the carriage, when my eye was attracted by one of them much larger than the rest, sealed with a black seal, and the address in Elliott's handwriting. I instantly resumed my seat; and placing the other letters in my pocket, proceeded to break the seal with some trepidation, which increased to a sickening degree when four letters fell out—all of them sealed with black, and in Elliott's handwriting, and addressed respectively to "Jacob Hillary, Esq.," "Mrs. Elliott," "Henry Elliott," and "Dr. ——" (myself.) I sat for a minute or two, with this terrible array before me, scarce daring to breathe, or to trust myself with my thoughts, when my wife entered, leading in her constant companion, little Elliott, to take their leave, as usual, before I set out for the day. The sight of "Henry Elliott," to whom one of these portentous letters was addressed, overpowered me. My wife, seeing me much discomposed, was beginning to inquire the reason, when I rose, and with gentle force put her out of the room and bolted the door, hurriedly telling her that I had just received unpleasant accounts concerning one or two of my patients. With trembling hands I opened the letter which was addressed to me, and read with infinite consternation as follows:

"When you are reading these few lines, kind doctor! I shall be sweetly sleeping the sleep of death. All will be over; there will be one wretch the less upon the earth.

"God, before whom I shall be standing face to face, while you read this letter, will, I hope, have mercy upon me, and forgive me for appearing before him uncalled for. Amen!

"But I could not live. I felt blindness—the last curse—descending upon me—blindness and beggary. I saw my wife broken hearted. Nothing but misery and starvation before her and her child.

"Oh, has she not loved me with a noble love? And yet it is thus I leave her! But she knows how through life I have returned her love, and she will hereafter find that love alone led me to take this dreadful step.

"Grievous has been the misery she has borne for my sake. I thought, in marrying her, that I might have overcome the difficulties which threatened us—that I might have struggled successfully



at least for our bread; but He ordered otherwise, and it has been in vain for me to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.

"Why did I leave life? Because I know, as if a voice from Heaven had told me, that my death will reconcile Mary and her father. It is me alone whom he hates, and her only on my account. When I shall be gone, he will receive her to his arms, and she and my son will be happy."

"Oh, my God! that I shall never see the face of Mary again, or— But presently she will look at our son, and she will revive.

"I entreat you as in the name of the dead—it is a voice from the grave—to be yourself the bearer of this news to Mary, when, and as you may think fit. Give her this letter, and also give, yourself, to Mr. Hillary, the letter which bears his dreadful name upon it. I know—I feel—that it will open his heart, and he will receive them to his arms.

"I have written also a few lines to my son. Ah, my boy, your father will be moldered into dust before you will understand what I have written. Grieve for your unfortunate father, but do not—disown him!

"As for you, best of men, my only friend, farewell! Forgive all the trouble I have given. God reward you! You will be in my latest thoughts. I have written to you last.

"Now I have done. I am calm; the bitterness of death is past. Farewell! The grave—the darkness of death is upon my soul—but I have no fear. To-night, before this candle shall have burned out, at midnight— Oh, Mary! Henry! shall we ever meet again?

"H. E."

I read this letter over half a dozen times, for every paragraph pushed the preceding one out of my memory. Then I took up mechanically and opened the letter addressed to his son. It contained a large lock of his father's hair, and the following verses,\* written in a great straggling hand:—

"I have wished for death; wherefore do I not call for my son?

"My son, when I am dead, bury me; and despise not thy mother, but honor her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not.

"Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee when thou wast in her womb; and when she is dead bury her by me in one grave.

"Thus on the point of death, writes thy father to his beloved son. REMEMBER!

"HENRY ELLIOTT."

As soon as I had somewhat recovered the shock occasioned by the perusal of these letters, I folded them all up, stepped hastily into my carriage, and postponing all my other visits, drove off direct to the

\* From the Apocrypha. Tobit, ch. iv., ver. 2, 3, 4.



lodging of Mr. Elliott. The woman of the house was standing at the door, talking earnestly with one or two persons.

"Where is Mr. Elliott?" I inquired, leaping out of the carriage.

"That's what we want to know, sir," replied the woman, very pale. "He must have gone out very late last night, sir—and hasn't been back since; for when I looked into his room this morning to ask about breakfast, it was empty."

"Did you observe anything particular in his appearance last night?" I inquired, preparing to ascend the little staircase.

"Yes, sir, very strange like! And about eight or nine o'clock, he comes to the top of the stairs, and calls out, 'Mrs. —, did you hear that noise? Didn't you see something?' 'Lud, sir,' said I, in a taking, he spoke so sudden, 'no! there wasn't any sound whatsoever!' so he went into his room, and shut the door, and I never seed him since."

I hastened to his room. A candlestick, its candle burned down to the socket, stood on the little table at which he generally sat, together with a pen or two, ink, black wax, a sheet of paper, and a Bible open at the place from which he had copied the words addressed to his son. The room was apparently just as its unfortunate and frantic occupant had quitted it. I opened the table drawer; it was full of paper which had been covered with writing, and was now torn into small fragments. One half sheet was left, full of strange incoherent expressions, apparently forming part of a prayer, and evincing, alas, how fearfully, the writer's reason was disturbed! But where was poor Elliott! What mode of death had he selected?

At first I thought of instantly advertising and describing his person, and issuing handbills about the neighborhood; but at length determined to wait till Monday's newspapers—some one of which might contain intelligence concerning him which might direct my movements. And in the meantime—how was I to appear before Mrs. Elliott, and account for my not bringing her husband? I determined to send her a written excuse, on the score of pressing and unexpected engagements, but promising to call upon her either on Sunday or Monday. I resolved to do nothing rashly; for it glanced across my mind, as possible, that Elliott had not really carried into execution the dreadful intentions expressed in his letter to me, but had resorted to a stratagem only in order to terrify Mr. Hillary into a reconciliation. This notion took such full possession of my heated imagination, that I at length lost sight of all the glaring improbabilities attending it. Alas, however, almost the first paragraph



that fell under my hurried eye, in scanning over the papers of Monday, was the following:—

“On Saturday, about eight o'clock in the morning, some laborers discovered the body of a man of respectable appearance, apparently about thirty years old, floating, without a hat, in the New River. It was immediately taken out of the water, but life seemed to have been for some hours extinct. One or two letters were found upon his person, but the writing was too much spread and blotted with the water to afford any clew to the identity of the unfortunate person. The body lies at the Red Boar public house, where a coroner's inquest is summoned for to-day at twelve o'clock.”

I drove off to the place mentioned in the paragraph, and arrived there just as the jury was assembling. There was a considerable crowd about the doors. I sent in my card; and stating that I believed I could identify the body for which the inquest was summoned, I was allowed to view the corpse, and ushered at once into the room where it lay.

I wish Mr. Hillary could have entered that room with me, and have stood beside me, as I stepped shudderingly forward, and perceived that I was looking upon—his victim! The body lay with its wet clothes undisturbed, just as it had been taken out of the water. The damp hair, the eyes wide open, the hands clinched as if with the agonies of death!

Here lay the husband of Mrs. Elliott—the fond object of her unconquerable love! This was he to whom she had written so tenderly on quitting him! Here lay he whom she had so sweetly consoled by almost daily messages through me! This was he to whom, with a pious confidence, she had predicted her speedy and happy return! This was the father of that sweet boy who sat prattling at my table only that morning! This—wretch! monster! fiend!—this is the body of him you flung, on an infamous charge, into the dungeons of Newgate! This is the figure of him that shall hereafter—I could bear it no longer, and rushed from the room in an agony! After drinking a glass of water I recovered my self-possession sufficiently to make my appearance in the jury room, where I deposed to such facts—carefully concealing, only for Mrs. Elliott and her son's sake, the causes which led to the commission of the fatal act—as satisfied the jury that the deceased had destroyed himself while in a state of mental derangement; and they returned their verdict accordingly.

After directing the immediate removal of the body to the house where Mr. Elliott had lodged—the scene of so many agonies—of



such intense and undeserved misery—I drove off, and, though quite unequal to the task, hurried through my round of patients, anxious to be at leisure in the evening for the performance of the solemn—the terrible duty imposed upon me by poor Elliott—the conveying his letter to Mr. Hillary, and communicating, at the same time, with all the energy in my power, the awful results of his cruel, his tyrannical, his unnatural conduct. How I prayed that God would give me power to shake that old man's guilty soul!

Our dinner was sent away that day almost untouched. My wife and I interchanged but few and melancholy words; our noisy, lively little guest was not present to disturb, by his innocent sallies, the mournful silence; for unable to bear his presence, I had directed that he should not be brought down that day. I had written to Mrs. Elliott a brief and hasty line, saying that I had just seen Mr. Elliott! but that it would be impossible for either of us to call upon her that day, adding that I would certainly call upon her the day after, and—Heaven pardon the equivocation!—bring Mr. Elliott, if possible, which I feared might be doubtful, as his eyes were under very active treatment.

I have had to encounter in my time many, very many trying and terrible scenes; but I never approached any with so much apprehension and anxiety as the one now cast upon me. Fortifying myself with a few glasses of wine, I put poor Elliott's letter to Mr. Hillary in my pocket-book, and drove off for — Square. I reached the house about eight o'clock. My servant, by my direction, thundered impetuously at the door—a startling summons I intended it to be! The porter drew open the door almost before my servant had removed his hand from the knocker.

“Is Mr. Hillary at home?” I inquired, stepping hurriedly from my carriage, with the fearful letter in my hand.

“He is, sir,” said the man, with a flurried air—“but—he—he—does not receive company, sir, since my mistress's death.”

“Take my card to him, sir. My name is Dr. —! I must see Mr. Hillary instantly.”

I waited in the hall for a few moments, and then received a message, requesting me to walk into the back drawing-room. There I saw Miss Gubbley—as the servant told me—alone, and dressed in deep mourning. What I heard of this woman inspired me with the utmost contempt and hatred for her. What a countenance! Meanness, malice, cunning, and sycophancy seemed struggling for the ascendant in its expression.

“Pardon me, madam—my business,” said I, peremptorily, “is



not with you, but with Mr. Hillary. Him I must see, and immediately."

"Dr.——, what is the matter?" she inquired, with mingled anger and anxiety in her countenance.

"I have a communication for Mr. Hillary's private ear—I must see him; I insist upon seeing him immediately."

"This is strange conduct, sir, really," said Miss Gubbley, in an impudent manner, but her features becoming every moment paler and paler. "Have you not already—"

I unceremoniously pushed the malignant little parasite aside, opened the folding-doors, and stepped instantly into the presence of the man I at once desired and dreaded to see. He sat on the sofa, in the attitude and with the expression of a man who had been suddenly aroused from sleep.

"Dr. ——!" he exclaimed, with an astonished and angry air. "Your servant, doctor! What's the meaning of all this?"

"I am sorry to intrude upon you, Mr. Hillary—especially after the unpleasant manner in which our acquaintance was terminated—but—I have a dreadful duty to perform"—pointing to the letter I held, and turning toward him its black seal. He saw it. He seemed rather startled or alarmed; motioned me, with a quick, anxious bow, to take a seat, and resumed his own. "Excuse me, Mr. Hillary—but we must be alone," said I, pointing to Miss Gubbley, who had followed me with a suspicious and insolent air, exclaiming, as she stepped hastily toward Mr. Hillary—"Don't suffer this conduct, sir! It's very incorrect—very, sir."

"We must be alone, sir," I repeated, calmly and peremptorily, "or I shall retire at once. You would never cease to repent that, sir;" and Mr. Hillary, as if he had suddenly discovered some strange meaning in my eye, motioned the pertinacious intruder to the door, and she reluctantly obeyed. I drew my chair near Mr. Hillary, who seemed, by this time, thoroughly alarmed.

"Will you read this letter, sir?" said I, handing it to him. He took it into his hand; looked first at the direction, then at the seal, and lastly at me, in silence.

"Do you know that handwriting, sir?" I inquired. He stammered an answer in the negative.

"Look at it, sir, again. You ought to know it—you must know it well." He laid down the letter; fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for his glasses; placed them with infinite trepidation upon his forehead, and again took the letter into his hands, which shook vio-



lently; and his sight was so confused with agitation, that I saw he could make nothing of it.

"It seems—it appears to be—a man's hand, sir. Whose is it? What is it about? What's the matter?" he exclaimed, looking at me over his glasses with a frightened stare.

"I have attended, sir, a coroner's inquest this morning—" The letter dropped instantly from Mr. Hillary's shaking hand upon the floor; his lips slowly opened.

"The writer of that letter, sir, was found drowned on Saturday last," I continued, slowly, looking steadfastly at him, and feeling myself grow paler every moment. "This day I saw the body stretched upon a shutter, at an inn. Oh, those dreadful eyes—that hair, matted and muddy—those clinched hands! Horror filled my soul, as I looked at all this, and thought of you!"

His lips moved, he uttered a few unintelligible sounds, and his face, suddenly bedewed with perspiration, assumed one of the most ghastly expressions that a human countenance could exhibit. I remained silent, nor did he speak; but the big drops rolled from his forehead and fell upon the floor. In the pier-glass opposite, to which my eye was attracted by seeing some moving figure reflected in it, I beheld the figure of Miss Gubbley; who, having been no doubt listening at the door, could no longer subdue her terrified curiosity, and stole into the room on tiptoe, and stood terror-stricken behind my chair. Her presence seemed to restore Mr. Hillary to consciousness.

"Take her away—go away—go—go," he murmured, and I led her, unresisting, from the room, and, to be secure from her further intrusion, bolted both the doors.

"You had better read the letter, sir," said I, with a deep sigh, resuming my seat; his eyes remained riveted on me.

"I—I—I—can not, sir!" he stammered. A long pause ensued. "If—she—had but called"—he gasped, "but once—or sent—after her—her mother's death—" and with a long groan he leaned forward, and fell against me.

"She did call, sir. She came the day after her mother's death," said I, shaking my head sorrowfully.

"No, she didn't" he replied, suddenly looking at me with a stupefied air.

"Then her visit was cruelly concealed from you, sir. Poor creature!—I know she called."

He rose slowly from the prostrate posture in which he had remained for the last few moment, clinched his trembling fists, and



shook them with impotent anger. "Who—who," he muttered—"who dared—I—I—I'll ring the bell. I'll have all the—"

"Would you have really received her, then, sir, if you had known of her calling?"

His lips moved, he attempted in vain to utter an answer, and sobbed violently, covering his face with his hands.

"Come, Mr Hillary, I see," said I, in a somewhat milder manner, "that the feelings of a father are not utterly extinguished"—he burst into vehement weeping; "and I hope that—that you may live to repent the frightful wrongs you have done; to redress the wrongs you have committed! Your poor persecuted daughter, Mr. Hillary, is not dead." He uttered a sudden sharp cry that alarmed me; grasped my hands, and carrying them to his lips, kissed them in a kind of ecstasy.

"Tell me, say plainly, only say—that Mary is alive!"

"Well, then, sir, your daughter is alive, but—"

He fell upon his knees, and groaned, "Oh God, I thank thee! I thank thee! How I thank thee!"

I waited till he had in some measure recovered from the ecstasy of emotion into which my words had thrown him, and assisted in loosening his shirt collar and neck handkerchief, which seemed to oppress him.

"Who, then," he stammered—"who was found drowned—the coroner's inquest—"

"Her poor broken-hearted husband, sir, who will be buried at my expense in a day or two."

He covered his face again with his hands, and cried bitterly.

"This letter was written by him to you, sir; and he sent it to me only a few hours, it seems, before he destroyed himself, and commissioned me to deliver it to you. Is not his blood, sir, lying at your door?"

"Oh, Lord, have mercy on me! Lord Christ, forgive me! Lord, forgive a guilty old sinner," he groaned, sinking again on his knees, and wringing his hands. "I—I am his murderer! I feel—I know it!"

"Shall I read to you, sir, his last words?" said I.

"Yes, but they'll choke me. I can't bear them." He sunk back exhausted upon the sofa. I took up the letter which had remained till then upon the floor, since he had dropped it from his palsied grasp, and opening it, read with faltering accents the following:—

"For your poor dear daughter's sake, sir, who is now a widow and a beggar, abandon your fierce and cruel resentment. I know



that I am the guilty cause of all her misery. I have suffered and paid the full penalty of my sin! And I am, when you read this, among the dead.

"Forgive me, father of my beloved and suffering wife!—forgive me, as I forgive you, in this solemn moment, from my heart, whatever wrongs you may have done me!

"Let my death knock loudly at your heart's door, so that it may open and take in my suffering, perishing Mary—your Mary, and our unoffending little one! I know it will! Heaven tells me that my sacrifice is accepted! I die full of grief, but contented in the belief that all will be well with the dear ones I leave behind me. God incline your heart to mercy! Farewell! So prays your unhappy, guilty, dying son-in-law.

HENRY ELLIOTT."

It was a long while before my emotion, almost blinding my eyes and choking my utterance, permitted me to conclude this melancholy letter. Mr. Hillary sat all the while aghast.

"The gallows is too good for me!" he gasped. "Oh, what a monster! what a wretch have I been! Ay, I'll surrender! I know I'm guilty! It's all my doing! I confess all! It was I—it was I put him in prison." I looked darkly at him as he uttered these last words, and shook my head in silence.

"Ah! I see, I see you know it all! Come, then! Take me away! Away with me to Newgate. Anywhere you like. I'll plead guilty!" He attempted to rise, but sunk back again into his seat.

"But—where's Mary?" he gasped.

"Alas," I replied, "she does not yet know that she is a widow! that her child is an orphan! She has herself, poor meek soul, been lying for many days at the gates of death, and even yet, her fate is more than doubtful!"

"Where is she? Let me know! tell me, or I shall die. Let me know where I may go and drop down at her feet, and ask her forgiveness!"

"She is in a common hospital—a lying-in hospital, sir—where she, a few days ago, only, gave birth to a dead child, after enduring, for the whole time of her pregnancy, the greatest want and misery! She has worked her poor fingers to the bones, Mr. Hillary. She has slaved like a common servant, for her child, her husband, and herself, and yet she has hardly found bread for them!"

"Oh! stay, stay, doctor. A common hospital! my daughter—a common hospital!" repeated Mr. Hillary, pressing his hand to his forehead, and staring vacantly at me.

"Yes, sir, a common hospital! Where else could she go to? God be thanked, sir, for finding such resources, such places of refuge



for the poor and forsaken! She fled thither to escape starvation, and to avoid eating the bread scarce sufficient for her husband and her child! I have seen her enduring such misery as would have softened the heart of a fiend! And, good God! how am I to tell her what has happened? How I shudder at the task that her dead husband has imposed upon me! What am I to say to her? Tell me, Mr. Hillary, for I am confounded, I am in despair! How shall I break to her this frightful event?" Mr. Hillary groaned. "Pray, tell me, sir," I continued, with real sternness, "what am I to do? How am I to face your wretched daughter in the morning? She has been unable even to see her husband for a moment since her illness. How will she bear being told that she is never to see him again? I shall be almost guilty of her murder!" I paused, greatly agitated.

"Tell her—tell her—conceal the death," he gasped; "and tell her first, that all's forgiven, if she'll accept my forgiveness, and forgive me! Tell her, be sure to tell her, that my whole fortune is hers and her child's. Surely that— I will make my will afresh. Every halfpenny shall go to her and her child. It shall, so help me, God!"

"Poor creature!" I exclaimed, bitterly, "can money heal thy broken heart?" I paused. "You may relent, Mr. Hillary, and receive your unhappy daughter into your house again, but, believe me, her heart will lie in her husband's grave!"

"Doctor, doctor! you are killing me!" he exclaimed, every feature writhing under the scourgings of remorse. "Tell me! only tell me what can I do more! This house—all I have, is hers, for the rest of her life. She may turn me into the streets. I'll live on bread and water, they shall roll in gold. But, oh, where is she? where is she? I'll send the carriage instantly." He rose, as if intending to ring the bell.

"No, no, Mr. Hillary; she must not be disturbed! She must remain at her present abode, under the roof of charity, where she lies, sweet being! humble and grateful among her sisters in suffering."

"I—I'll give a thousand pounds to the charity—I will. I'll give a couple of thousands, so help me God, I will. And I'll give it in the name of a repentant old sinner. Oh—I'll do everything that a guilty wretch can do. But I must see my daughter! I must hear her blessed innocent lips say that she forgives me."

"Pause, sir," said I, solemnly; "you know not that she will live to leave the hospital, or receive your penitent acknowledgement—that she will not die while I am telling her the horrid—"



"What! has she yet to hear of it?" he exclaimed, looking aghast.

"I told you so, sir, some time ago."

"Oh, yes—you did, you did, but I forgot. Lord, Lord, I feel going mad!" He rose feebly from the sofa, and staggered for a moment to and fro, but his knees refused their support, and he sunk down again upon his seat, where he sat staring at me with a dull glassy eye, while I proceeded:

"Another melancholy duty remains to be performed. I think, sir, you should see his remains."

"I see the body!" Fright flitted over his face. "Do you wish me to drop down dead beside it, sir? I see the body! It would burst out a-bleeding directly I got into the room, for I murdered him! Oh, God, forgive me! Oh, spare me such a sight!"

"Well, sir, since your alarm is so great, that sad sight may be spared; but there is one thing you must do"—I paused; he looked at me apprehensively—"testify your repentance, sir, by following his poor remains to the grave."

"I—I could not! It's no use frightening me thus, doctor. I—I tell you I should die, I should never return home alive. But, if you'll allow it, my carriage shall follow. I'll give orders this very night for a proper, a splendid funeral, such as is fit for—my—my—son-in-law! He shall be buried in my vault. No, no, that can not be, for then"—he shuddered—"I must lie beside him! But, I can not go to the funeral! Lord, Lord, how the crowd would stare at me! how they would hoot me! They would tear me out of the coach. No"—he trembled—"spare me that also, kind sir—spare me attending the funeral! I'll remain at home in my own room in the dark all that day upon my knees, but I can not, nay, I will not follow him to the grave. The tolling of that bell"—his voice died away—"would kill me."

"There is yet another thing, sir. His little boy"—my voice faltered—"is living at my house; perhaps you would refuse to see him, for he is very like his wretched father."

"Oh, bring him! bring him to me!" he murmured. "How I will worship him! what I will do for him! But how his murdered father will always look out of his eyes at me! Oh, my God! whither shall I go; what must I do to escape? Oh that I had died and been buried with my poor wife, the other day, before I had heard of all this!"

"You would have known, you would have heard of it hereafter, sir."

"Ah! that's it! I know it, I know what you mean, and I feel it's



true. Yes, I shall be damned for what I've done. Such a wretch, how can I expect forgiveness? Oh, will you read a prayer with me? No, I'll pray myself—no."

"Pray, sir, and may your prayers be heard! And also pray that I may be able to tell safely my awful message to your daughter, that the blow may not smite her into the grave! And lastly, sir," I added, rising and addressing him with all the emphasis and solemnity I could, "I charge you, in the name of God, to make no attempt to see your daughter, or send to her, till you see or hear from me again."

He promised to obey my injunctions, imploring me to call upon her the next day, and seizing my hand between his own with a convulsive grasp, from which I could not extricate it but with some little force. As I had never once offered a syllable of sympathy throughout our interview, so I quitted his presence coldly and sternly, while he threw himself down at full length upon the sofa, and I heard without any emotion his half-choked exclamation, "Lord, Lord, what is to become of me!"

On reaching the back drawing-room, I encountered Miss Gubbley walking to and fro, excessively pale and agitated. I had uncoiled that little viper—I had plucked it from the heart into which it had crept, and so far I felt that I had not failed in that night's errand! I foresaw her speedy dismissal; and it took place within a week from the day on which I had visited Mr. Hillary.

The next day, about noon, I called at the lodging where Elliott's remains were lying, in order that I might make a few simple arrangements for a speedy funeral.

"Oh, here's Dr. ——!" exclaimed the woman of the house, to a gentleman dressed in black, who, with two others in similar habiliments, was just quitting. "These 'ere gentlemen, sir, are come about the funeral, sir, of poor dear Mr. Elliott." I begged them to return into the house. "I presume, sir," said I, "you have been sent here by Mr. Hillary's orders?"

"A—Mr. Hillary did me the honor, sir, to request me to call, sir," replied the polite man of death, with a low bow, "and am favored with the expression of his wishes, sir, to spare no expense in showing his respect for the deceased. So my men have just measured the body, sir; the shell will be here to-night, sir, the leaden coffin the day after, and the outer coffin—"

"Stop, sir; Mr. Hillary is premature. He has quite mistaken my wishes, sir. I act as the executor of Mr. Elliott, and Mr. Hillary has no concern whatever with the burial of these remains."



He bowed, with an air of mingled astonishment and mortification.

"It is my wish and intention, sir," said I, "that this unfortunate gentleman be buried in the simplest and most private manner possible."

"Oh, sir! but Mr. Hillary's orders to me were—pardon me, sir—so very liberal, to do the thing in a gentleman-like way—"

"I tell you again, sir, that Mr. Hillary has nothing whatever to do with the matter, nor shall I admit of his interference. If you choose to obey my orders, you will procure a plain deal coffin, a hearse and pair, and one mourning coach, and provide a grave in — church-yard—nay, open Mr. Hillary's vault and bury there, if he will permit."

"I really think, sir, you'd better employ a person in the small way," said he, casting a grim look at his two attendants; "I am not accustomed—"

"You may retire then, sir, at once," said I; and with a lofty bow the great undertaker withdrew. No! despised, persecuted, and forsaken had poor Elliott been in his life; there should be, I resolved, no splendid mockery—no fashionable foolery about his burial! I chose for him, not the vault of Mr. Hillary, but a grave in the humble church-yard of —, where the poor suicide might slumber in "penitential loneliness!"

He was buried as I wished—no one attending the funeral but myself, the proprietor of the house in which he had lived at the period of his death, and the early and humble acquaintance who had attended his wedding. I had wished to carry with us as chief mourner, little Elliott, by way of fulfilling, as far as possible, the touching injunctions left by his father, but my wife dissuaded me from it. "Well, poor Elliott," said I, as I took my last look into his grave—

"After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."

Heaven forgive the rash act which brought his days to an untimely close, and him whose cruelty and wickedness occasioned it!"

I shall not bring the reader again into the guilty and gloomy presence of Mr. Hillary. His hard heart was indeed broken by the blow that poor Elliott had struck, whose mournful prophecy was in this respect fulfilled. Providence decreed that the declining days of the inexorable and unnatural parent should be clouded with a wretchedness that admitted of neither intermission nor alleviation, equally destitute as he was of consolation from the past, and hope from the future!



And his daughter! oh, disturb not the veil that has fallen over the broken-hearted!

Never again did the high and noble spirit of Mary Elliott lift itself up—for her heart lay buried in her young husband's grave—the grave dug for him by the eager and cruel hands of her father! In vain did those hands lavishly scatter about her all the splendor and luxuries of unbounded wealth—they could never divert her cold undazzled eye from the mournful image of him whose death had purchased them; and what could she see in her too late repentant father but his murderer?

THE END.



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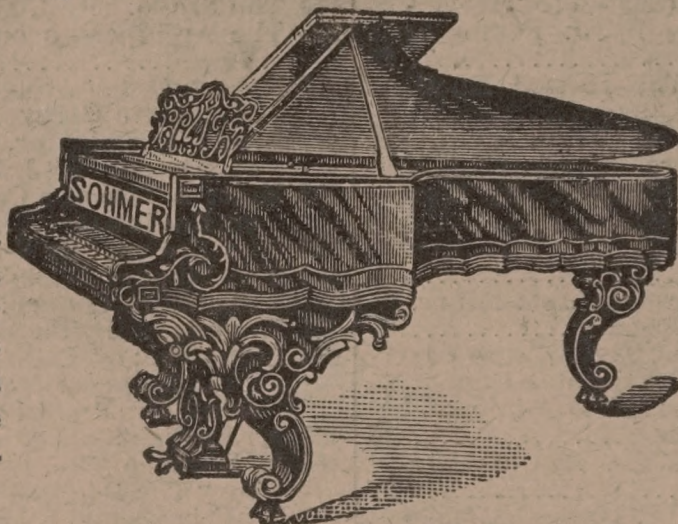
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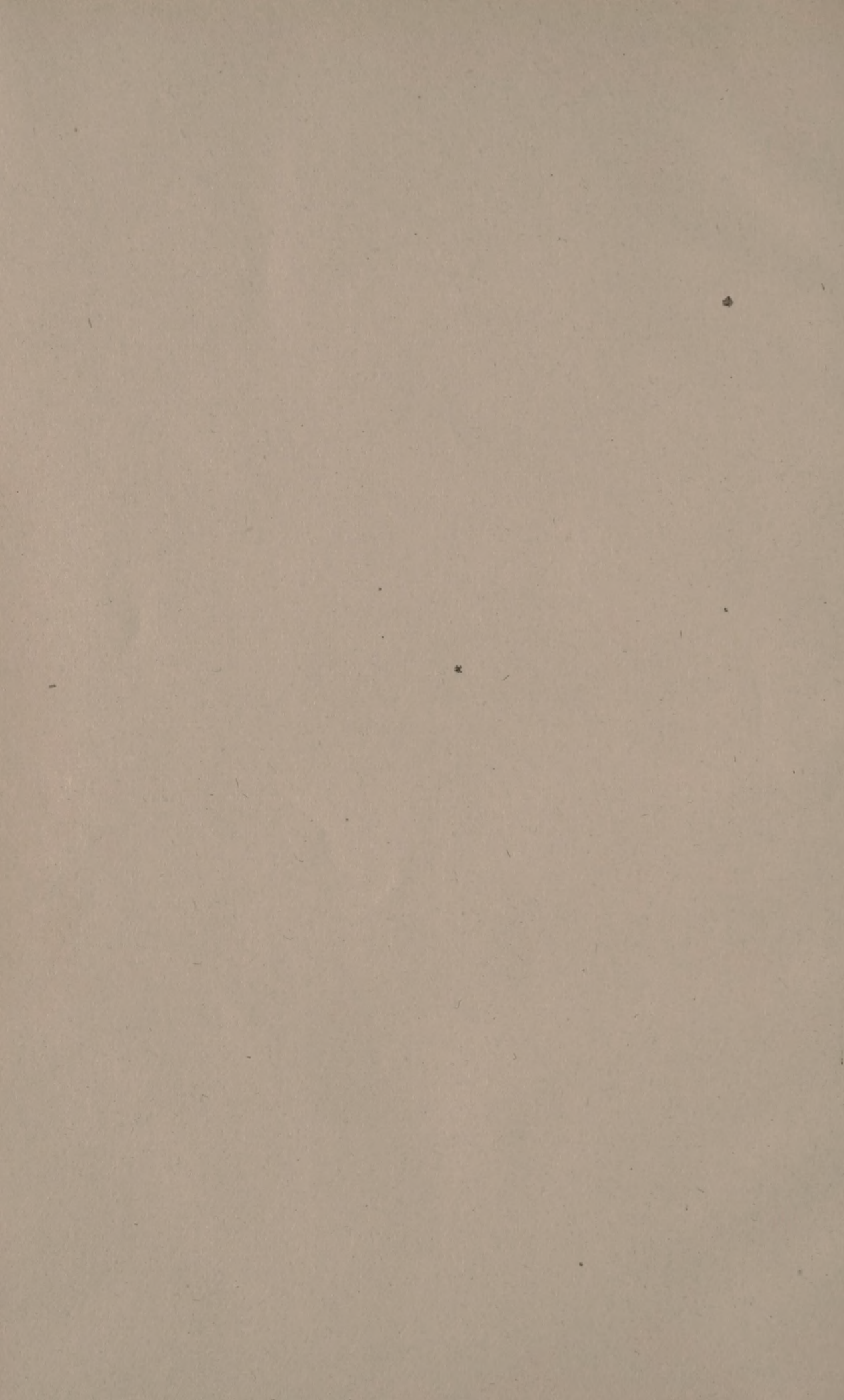
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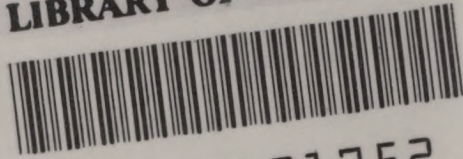








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